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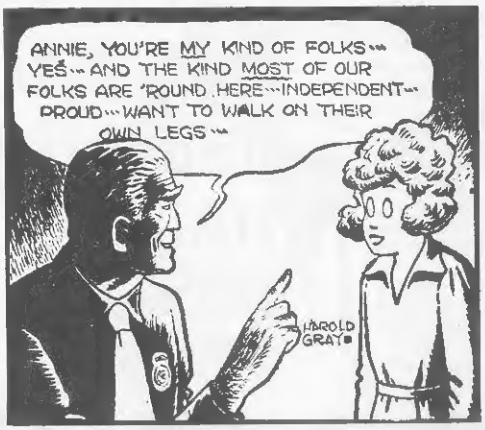
ANNIE, YOU'RE MY KIND OF FOLKS— YES— AND THE KIND MOST OF OUR FOLKS ARE 'ROUND HERE— INDEPENDENT— PROUD— WANT TO WALK ON THEIR OWN LEGS—
HAROLD GRAY

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Satire on the Comics Page

A book-length study by comics historian Kenneth Barker. Everything you wanted to know about *Little Orphan Annie*—and if you didn't, you should have. A thorough-going review of the major aspects of this major strip.

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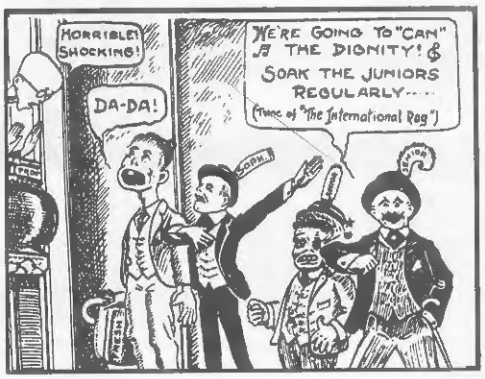
Those Eyes!

Little Orphan Annie was more than a comic strip, and the levels on which it operated included more than Harold Gray's injections of philosophy. Donald Phelps provides an essay on the universe of Annie, and the meanings of Gray's images and conventions.



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The Master Storyteller

If *Little Orphan Annie* has been an enigma to some, inviting analysis and re-examination, so too has the career—and very person—of Harold Gray been shrouded in obscurity. Harry McCracken, having studied the Gray archives and personal papers, provides a profile of Gray and some new insights on his work.

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NEMO No. 5: MORT WALKER in an exclusive interview; the debut of the "Fantasy in the Comics" series with the entire run of H.G. DART's *The Explorigator*; Donald Phelps on *The Bungle Family*, with several great Sunday pages; "Penman of the Past" FRANKLIN BOOTH; and a "guest editorial" by HAROLD GRAY.

NEMO No. 6: FLOYD GOTTFREDSON is interviewed about *Mickey Mouse*; a checklist of his Mousework; WILLIAM DONAHEY's *Teenie Weenies*; several classic *Alley Oop* Sunday pages; S.J. PERELMAN's early cartoon work; "Penman of the Past" J.H. DONAHEY; more of the SAUNDERS bio; editorial by RICK MARSCHALL; cover by V.T. HAMLIN.

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COMING NEXT ISSUE:

George McManus, Joe Barbera, Billy Marriner . . . and HAL FOSTER!

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A rare interview with Hal Foster! When the *Prince Valiant* creator was alive, he seldom granted interviews. But in the late '60s he did speak with the French critic and bibliophile Fred Schreiber. The interview was never published, but *NEMO* has secured rights to finally put in it print. Foster is remarkably candid about everything from the nature of comic-strip creation to his successor on *Tarzan*, Burne Hogarth. Illustrated with unpublished art.

Also: An exclusive interview with Joe Barbera, one of recent animation's major figures, on his career and the creation of *Tom and Jerry*, *The Flintstones*, *The Jetsons*, the *Smurfs*, and much, much more. Illustrated!

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All in the next quality-packed issue of *NEMO: The Classic Comics Library*!

Editorial

By Richard Marschall

The Master

Portrait of Harold Gray done especially for *NEMO* by present *Annie* artist/writer Leonard Starr.

In a departure from past and future *NEMO* practice, this issue is devoted to a single strip and to one artist's life work: *Little Orphan Annie* by Harold Gray.

I have in my collection, but have misplaced, a rather hefty issue of a film publication from the '50s, an issue given over to one film, *The Birth of a Nation*. I recall—strange as it may seem—that much of the film was viewed through a Marxist prism (Stalinism vs. Lovestoneite interpretations of Reconstruction and iris shots?) but the landmark movie was dissected well. Such a film deserved such, and it ought to be considered and reconsidered through the ages in papers, articles, monographs, and theses.

Harold Gray's strip is easily a comic-strip counterpart of Griffith's epic, not in its seminal aspects, or influence on later efforts, or even in its relationship to its creator's career; but *Little Orphan Annie*, over the course of its 45-year run, was an outstanding artistic statement, and one marked by stunning individuality and brilliance. And like *Birth of a Nation*, *Little Orphan Annie* has been massively misunderstood by casual observers who cared not to look beyond superficialities, and by avowedly antagonistic critics whose frothy perorations have warped others' perceptions.

So let us now praise famous orphans. To *this* critic, the time is overdue to grant the duo of Gray and Annie their due. Both in defense of the misunderstood aspects, and because the remarkable strip demands it, this issue of *NEMO* is, I am proud to judge and say, an authoritative and enlightening treatment of this important comic strip.

Gray was an American individualist in many representative ways. He worked as he pleased:—he drew a "realistic" strip in a decidedly unrealistic style;—he constantly challenged public bafflement with those bizarre eyes;—he emphasized "talking heads" in an era of fictional action and violence;—he clung to his own views, fiercely and loudly, in the face of disapproval from his bosses and complaints from his clients and other portions of the news media. Such defiance flew in the face of conventional wisdom in exercising his craft. Yet from his lonely and uncompromising outpost he succeeded. *Little Orphan Annie* was for decades among the top five strips in popularity, and his followers were legion and loyal.

We'd have to go to such men as Franklin, Edison, Fulton, and even Johnny Appleseed to find other oddball, obsessive American types who seemed strange while carving their niches, but then fitted success and immortality well as those niches became shrines. Gray was the twice-married father of none who reportedly spent all his waking hours researching or realizing the strip; by all accounts a rough-and-tumble guy who devoted his life to creating and chronicling the exploits of a little girl. Whether he was a comic-strip artist who best told his stories by reflecting his basic philosophic attitudes, which he held, with missionary zeal, as appropriate and (he believed) elemental to the vast majority of his readers; or was a propagandist (how misused that legitimate label has become) who seized upon the medium of the comics, is almost beside the point, but worth considering. The point *is* that Harold Gray fashioned a comic strip of sustained quality and frequent brilliance; while intensely personal, his output was embraced by millions. He had an almost instinctive feel for the conventions—potentialities and limitations—of the comic-strip form, and he left us with a legacy, a body of work, that has been equalled or approximated in seemingly dissimilar ways by other artists, but seldom surpassed.

I would like to advance a few points to underscore or add to those made by the impressive trio of writers in this issue of *NEMO*.

What constantly and refreshingly amazes me about Gray is his talent as a technician. He *knew* what he was doing. His art was that of the comics' greatest Expressionist. No barely competent realist he, Gray created mood and was able to convey thought—attitude, emotion, implication, deprecation, approbation, joy, peril—in purely visual (and stark, economically graphic) terms better than any other comic artist. His cellmate and soulmate, Chester Gould, was the comics' other great Expressionist.

Al Capp once remarked to me (and he was an admirer of Gray's craft) that the figures in *Little Orphan Annie* "had all the vitality of Easter Island statues." The point has validity, and one senses that it was no accident on Gray part. The stolid figures were functional reflections of the inevitable shadows, the omnipresent open doorways to dark rooms that Phelps observes, the static backgrounds. They, all together, form a common theme . . . and the musical analogy is intriguing: Does Gray's work resemble a Gregorian chant, with all elements just octaves apart, or a High Baroque fugue, with several contrapunctal variations masterfully restating the same theme? One thing is certain: There are few cadenzas in *Little Orphan Annie*, little sense of improvisation. The frozen backgrounds and deliberate figures, once again, set a mood—an overall, and overwhelming, mood of tension. There are forces at work in Annie's world, and in Gray's; and many of them are sombre. These moods are stars of the strip as surely as is Sandy and, like Sandy, they are always there and are usually silent. Those moods, those forces, are seldom broken; they are almost like black holes, absorbing all other emotions and moods . . .

almost absorbing light itself. So the backgrounds and the "Easter Island statues" prevail through all other exigencies of story and art. Does Annie change locale? The city and rural areas she graces seem always like friezes behind her, suggesting her isolation. Do fights or gunshots come as *denouements* in continuities? The violence is usually understated—off-panel, perhaps, or a puff of smoke instead of a flashy, loud discharge; a fight, but with silent dispatch and only a fleeting glimpse—so there is never the traditional *release* that such elements are supposed to bring a story. The tension remains, forbidding and triumphant. The pressure valve, re-designed by by Harold Gray, has by intention not done its traditional job.

In this regard, Gray and Roy Crane are at opposite ends of the spectrum. Crane would draw a fight that would continue for two weeks; but with Gray two *panels* of violence was rare. And Crane, father of comic-strip onomatopoeia (POW! BAM! FWOP!) depicted such elements differently from Gray, who usually made his violence silent—and grimmer—certainly uglier, even when justified. And both men knew what they were doing.

With clinician's skill, Gray was also a master of characterization. There has been little note taken of his affinity to John Bunyan. Neither writer was at a loss for invention when Manifestations were employed, nor was there creative desperation in naming so many characters after their attributes; it was a noble, and useful, device in *Pilgrim's Progress*, and just as legitimate and effective in *Little Orphan Annie*. A reference to Bunyan can remind us that *Little Orphan Annie*, in *corpus*, is more than a melodramatic comic strip: It is a morality play. Further yet, it is a mortality play.

We are reminded of Gray's literary qualities beyond the comparison to Bunyan. We would have to go to Dickens for richness of invention; Hugo for construction; and Goethe for talents of sympathetic observation to find Gray's counterparts in prose fiction. He compares well with these giants.

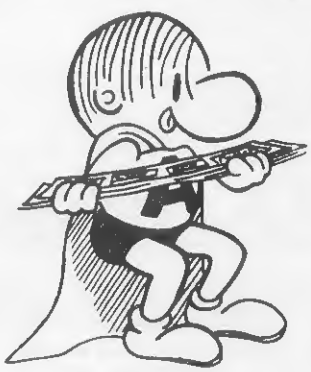
Technically he also set a seemingly ridiculous task for himself as a creator of truncated, one-a-day, episodic fiction: Gray usually (and there were periodic exceptions) had one day's strip represent one day's action. This is an incredible challenge when one has to deal with action, conversations, conflicts, and a running storyline. Yet Gray met his own challenge—a remarkable technical feat, and one that few, if any, of his contemporaries even attempted.

Finally, Gray provides a touchstone. The strip is a lightning-rod for our emotions and intuitions as few other have been. For me—and millions of others, especially during the strip's prime—those often-crude penlines transported a *magnum opus* of such power that I am often moved to tears by what they constructed. To those who resented Gray's morality (or philosophy: Never call it politics, because it was there, free of partisanship, before, during, and after the New Deal, his presumed Nemesis), they too reacted emotionally. *Little Orphan Annie* was seldom ignored. *It was done too well.*

The *NEMO Bookshelf*, following Segar and Sterrett, will reprint *Little Orphan Annie*, and any who have not had the opportunity to read long runs of Harold Gray are advised of a pleasant surprise: I am jealous of a newcomer's feelings of discovery and appreciation when encountering a strip like *Little Orphan Annie* for the first time. For readers unfamiliar with Gray—and, yes, for he who *has* read the classic strip—I am proud to offer this issue of *NEMO* as an annotation, if you will, a Michelin Guide, to one of the most remarkable strips, and one of the most talented craftsmen, in the history of comics.

Richard Kyle

N.B.: Our regular and continuing features are on vacation this issue. In *NEMO* #9 we will continue with intallments of *Penmen of the Past*, *Fantasy in the Comics*, and the Allen Saunders autobiography *Playwright for Paper Actors*.



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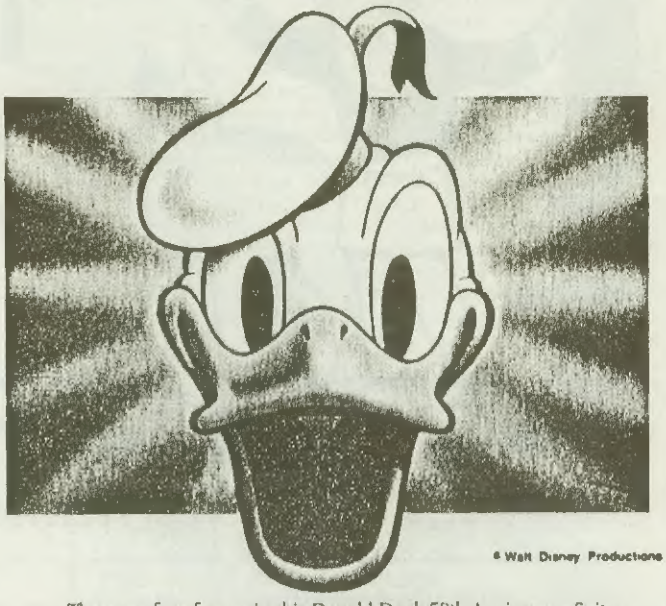

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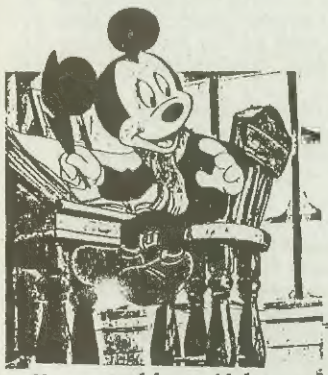

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The Life and Love, Friends and Foes, Trials and Triumphs of Little Orphan Annie

By Kenneth Barker

Introduction

Little Orphan Annie is part of North American mythology, as easily recognizable as other comic characters and many other cultural icons. For over 40 years she lived, travelled and philosophized in newspapers across the continent, quite frequently in the company of her faithful dog Sandy and her foster "Daddy," Oliver Warbucks. Her adventures were reprinted in books and comic books, and broadcast over radio; she was featured in two full-length movies and an award winning Broadway musical; and beginning on April 22, 1974 her old adventures were re-run in the newspapers themselves, a rare phenomenon.

The philosophy promoted by Annie and "Daddy" Warbucks had a gutsy realism and a provocative intensity which disturbed many people, conservative and liberal alike. In the 1920s it glorified a violent response to overbearing bullies; in the 1930s it challenged popular condemnation of big-businessmen; in the 1940s it dared, in the midst of war, to question political behavior; in the 1950s it warned of Communist conspiracies and in the 1960s it took a tough attitude toward hippies and protestors.

During its extended run the strip was analyzed, criticized and ridiculed in both the popular press and academic journals, sometimes fairly but—more often than not—with very little evidence of careful research or reasoned judgment. Inaccurate and intemperate opinions were expressed and then picked up and passed on by other writers. Few took the trouble to do first-hand research. Yet despite frequent criticism and occasional press censorship, the strip retained strong reader support long after other strips had passed into oblivion.

The man behind the controversial strip was Harold Gray, a native of Illinois with strong populist sentiments. He wrote and drew the strip from its beginning in 1924 until a short time before his death by cancer in May 1968, promoting in the process his own social, moral, and even religious values. These convictions included a forceful antipathy to social pretension, a firm rejection of religious intolerance, a biting ridicule of moral hypocrisy, a strong condemnation of abused power and a fiery repudiation of press censorship; as well as the more controversial approval of vigilante justice and "good-hearted" criminal behavior.

The following is based on a reading of Gray's complete text, all 44 years of daily and Sunday pages from August 5, 1924 to June, 1968. Locating the material was a task in itself and I express indebtedness to the microfilm services of the Toronto Public Library, the New York City Public Library, and the Firestone Library of Princeton University, as well as to Bill Blackbeard, curator of the San Francisco Academy of Comic Art.

This study grew out of a course I taught for the English Department of John Abbott College in suburban Montreal from 1974-1977. From this came an article, "Annie, Warbucks, and Harold Gray's Gospel," which appeared in the July 1978 issue of Theology Today. *Fascinated by Gray's work, I then undertook a further study based upon a careful analysis of the entire 44-year run of Gray's Annie.*

In presenting the study in this format I wish to dedicate it to my three daughters: Colleen, Kathleen, and Jennifer, who have tried to keep me young in heart. —*K.B.*

Kankakee to La Jolla—And Beyond

The small city of Kankakee lies 55 miles due south of Chicago amid the farmland of central Illinois. Developed in the 1850s as a townsite by the Illinois Central Railway, it nestles on the southern bank of the river whose name it bears: Kankakee—Indian for "beautiful land." At this confluence of prairie, railroad and river, Harold Lincoln Gray was born on January 20, 1894, the son of Ira L. Gray and Estella M. Rosencrans.

In 1901, when Harold was seven, Ira bought the family homestead from his aging father William Wallace Gray and young Harold spent the next five years on a cattle and horse farm three miles southeast of Chebanse, itself eight miles southeast of Kankakee. As Harold later recalled, "Chebanse was full of grassy yards, shady trees, dirt streets, and a little dust hanging in the air along with the drone of bees, horses and buggies—and friendly people." Although the family post office was in Clifton, it was in Chebanse that the family shopped, banked,

All illustrations from the collection of Kenneth Barker

You can't go home again.

attended church and watched the Spanish-American War veterans stage a sham battle and parade on holidays. Chebanse was the home of many Civil War veterans, the site of the Chebanse *Herald* and the location of the railway siding from which cattle were shipped to Chicago.

Harold's grandfather had moved to the homestead in 1870 and was a leading member of the Methodist Church in Chebanse. His wife died in late 1905 and he passed away in early 1906. Both were in their early eighties; both died in Watseka, about 18 miles southeast of Chebanse, and both were buried in the Chebanse Evergreen Cemetery. In late 1906 the family homestead was sold.

Time magazine reported in 1964 that young Harold had been pulling morning glories from the family cornfield in 1906 when he decided there must be an easier living. From the farm the family moved to West Lafayette, Indiana where Harold graduated from Public School in 1908, High School in 1912, and Purdue University, with a degree in engineering, in 1917.

Following graduation he enlisted in the Army, becoming a bayonet instructor. However, he saw no oversea service and was mustered out of the force in Atlanta, Georgia. He then joined the art department of *The Chicago Tribune* and eventually became an assistant to Robert Sydney Smith, who drew the highly popular and lucrative comic strip *The Gumps*.

***The Gumps*, on which Gray worked before doing *Little Orphan Annie*.**

LOOK OUT THERE! ARE YOU GOING TO LET THAT KID JUGGLE THAT EXPENSIVE CHINA LIKE THAT? THOSE DISHES ARE JUST AS SAFE IN HIS HANDS AS THEY'D BE IN A CORN SHELLER-
CHESTER GUMP! — ISN'T THAT SWEET OF MY LITTLE MAN? WHAT WOULD MAMA DO WITHOUT YOU?

Anyone who has examined the unsophisticated, even primitive quality of Smith's work will understand the thoughts which must have gone through Gray's 28 year old mind on March 15, 1922 when the 45 year old Smith signed a million-dollar contract with *The Tribune*. To produce the strip he was guaranteed $100,000 a year over a ten-year period. A little more than two years later Gray's *Little Orphan Annie* made its first appearance in *The New York News*. Harold had found his easier way.

Gray devoted the rest of his life to the production of the strip. For more than 44 years he poured himself into his work, to such an extent that "Daddy" Warbucks became an expression of his own personality. Mort Walker has reported that Gray "identified so closely with his character that he drew Warbucks on his deathbed, bidding Annie and all the characters farewell, to coincide with (his) own imminent death from cancer."

Gray's early environment was clearly reflected in the strip. Much of the action was set against rolling countrysides, railways, rivers, farms and small towns. Midwestern locations were identified by name: Chebanse, Clifton, Chicago, the Ohio River, and Springfield. On April 4, 1954 two couples got into an argument but found reconciliation when they learned one had been "born an' raised near La-fay-ette, Indiana" and the other "brought up near Logansport!" Even in the Amazon "Daddy" recognized a fraud who had worked in a carnival show in LaFayette 40 years before.

However, the dimensions of the strip extended beyond the Midwest. Annie journeyed from the Atlantic to the Pacific, from Mexico to near or beyond the Canadian border, to the South Seas, Europe, the Amazon River, and Africa. And "Daddy"

THERE! ANYBODY SEES US NOW, WE'RE JUST A KID AND A DOG GOIN' ALONG 'BOUT OUR BUSINESS- WE'LL TAKE THIS ROAD- IT'S ONLY A FEW MILES TO THAT BIG TOWN-

journeyed even further, spending a great part of his time in far distant places around the globe, often managing parts of his far-flung industrial empire.

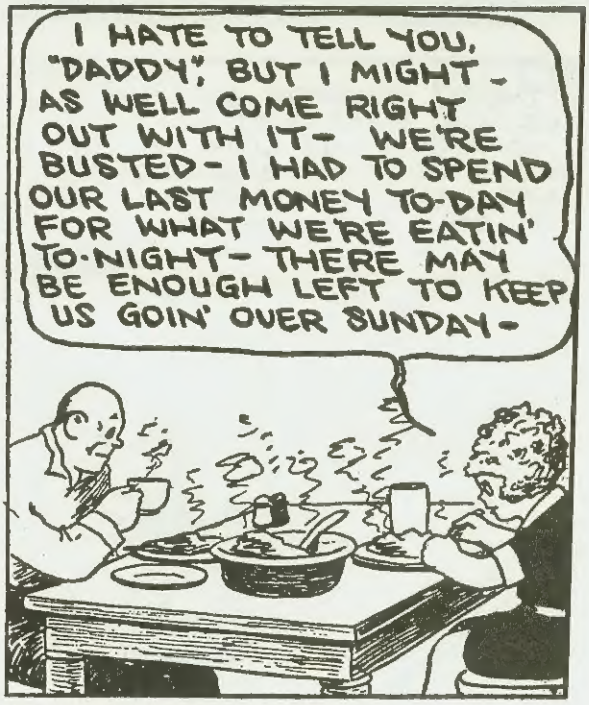
Though critics were severe in their denunciation of "Daddy" allowing Annie to wander about the countryside unattended, Gray was using a well-established literary device. Homer's *Odyssey*, Virgil's *Aeneid*, John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* and Mark Twain's *Huckleberry Finn*, to name only a few, made extensive use of the travel or quest motif. Gray's more immediate inspiration, though, may have been Charles Dickens. In an interesting exchange in February 1939, Dickens's work was praised by Annie's friend Tuck Buckle:

> *Take "Great Expectations," or almost anything Dickens wrote. Put in automobiles, and electric lights and telephones and running water and what's out of date about his stories? Sure, clothes are different and manners, perhaps. But people are just the same. Emotions, too. And Dickens knew people, Annie.*

The operative word for Gray is people. Travel brought Annie into touch with a wide variety of people from every walk of life, including working people, notwithstanding a contention of Maurice Horn in *A History of the Comic Strip* that "we see Annie living comfortably with vagabonds and millionaires—preferably with farmers, poor but honest people, but never with workingmen." The statement was based upon the results of a study published in 1954 by Lyle W. Shannon using the 110 Sunday pages from April 18, 1948 to July 2, 1950. Shannon observed that during that two-year period Annie had lived with a wealthy millionaire for 27 weeks; poor n'er-do-well farmers for 29 weeks; a rugged girl, whose wife-beating husband had left her, for 15 weeks; and an unemployed couple with eight children for 16 weeks.

However, Shannon's survey was far too limited. From 1924 to 1948 Annie had spent time living with Angus Flint, a small town banker; Charley Wells the railway worker; Mike or Monk Dooley, a taxi driver; Jack Boot, a prosperous shoe maker; the lawyer John Tecum; Dr. Al Zee, psychiatrist; Spike Spangle, small-town businessman; and Tic Toc the cartoonist.

To be sure there were innocent poor folk such as Mrs. Pewter, Mrs. Twinkle, and Mr. & Mrs. Fred Futile; good-hearted bums or derelicts such as Doc Croak, Mr. Dan Drift, and "Dandy" Dan, to say nothing of Annie and a penniless "Daddy" themselves on the bum; the kindly and not so kindly crooks such as Gold Brick Jack, Nick Gatt, and Vic Venom; and wealthy businessmen such as Len Leets. But they were only part of the complex social mix found in the strip.


I HATE TO TELL YOU, "DADDY", BUT I MIGHT - AS WELL COME RIGHT OUT WITH IT- WE'RE BUSTED - I HAD TO SPEND OUR LAST MONEY TO-DAY FOR WHAT WE'RE EATIN' TO-NIGHT- THERE MAY BE ENOUGH LEFT TO KEEP US GOIN' OVER SUNDAY-

Was "Daddy" the ultimate plutocrat?

Though critics were naive in their insistence that Gray reduce Annie to the dimensions of a normal child, he responded to their complaint of parental neglect. "Daddy" was allowed to express feelings of remorse. At the outset of 1932 he made a resolution:

Go away and leave you, Annie? Never again, if I can help it, and I think I can. You're a witness to that, Bill. This is my New Year's resolution. From now on I will stick to Annie and will stay at home and stick to business, too.

The promise wasn't kept.

By 1939 "Daddy" felt the solution was to take Annie with him:

Did you think your old "Daddy" figured to run out on you again? Well. . . I. . . that. . . is. . . I always have, eh? Not any more, Annie. I've learned my lesson. This time you're going too! It's time you saw something of the world.

"DADDY" WARBUCKS, HOME AT LAST, TRIES FRANTICALLY TO PICK UP A VERY COLD TRAIL---
LITTLE ANNIE ESCAPED FROM THE VILLAINOUS MISS TREAT, BEFORE REACHING "HIGH GATE SCHOOL"-
YES, WUN WEY- BUT WHERE DID SHE GO? WHAT BECAME OF HER?

Eleven days later en route to London with "Daddy," Annie was bound, gagged, and thrown overboard by Axel and his gang.

In the middle of the World War II "Daddy" made yet another pledge:

I've made some ghastly mistakes in the past, when I've had to go away, and have let you land in some terrible places. Well, this time it's going to be different.

It wasn't.

Despite these misgivings, "Daddy" had in actual fact been reasonably responsible. Who, for instance, could blame him for leaving Annie in the care of Mrs. Warbucks or Mrs. Sandstone? Before entrusting Annie to the care of the latter he explained carefully:

I've furnished an apartment for you two and I'll send her money every month. You'll be sent to private school and she'll take good care of you. And I'll write as often as I can, Annie. And I'll think of you all the time I'm away.

There were failings, to be sure, and as time went on "Daddy" became less protective of Annie. By 1948 he was taking her *into* dangerous situations. But on most occasions he was rescuing her from predicaments not of his making.

No wonder Annie had a more positive assessment of "Daddy's" tutelage:

He left me pretty much on my own most of th' time. He figgered I'd grow up smarter if I had to look out for myself stead o' bein' pampered an' spoiled and protected all th' time. But whenever I'd get into any jam too tough for me to handle, he always used to show up and get me out.

Any proper evaluation of Warbucks's parental behavior must be made in the context of Gray's literary style. He was, after all, writing an adventure strip with strong elements of fantasy. He not only faced the very practical task of maintaining reader interest over an incredibly long period of time; he had to give Annie enough freedom to find new locations and to develop a wide diversity of associations through which issues of moral and social significance could be explored. To judge the structure of the strip too rigidly is to judge it too superficially.

Gray's own extensive travel, literary and non-literary, came to an end in La Jolla, California on May 9, 1968 with death by cancer. Over the years he had travelled widely in the continental U.S.A. to gauge public opinion. He continued to work on the strip almost to the end. It had served him well. The distance from the corn field of Illinois to the opulence of La Jolla was great, but even more important for Gray, the strip had enabled him to make his own Odyssey of thought.

AS IF YOU WEREN'T ENOUGH TROUBLE WITHOUT BEING DESTRUCTIVE AS WELL — YOU'LL CLEAN UP THAT MESS AND YOU'LL GET NO SUPPER UNDERSTAND —
OW!
Annie's first surrogate parent: Miss Asthma.

Annie the Heroine

Despite the presence of an extensive list of multidimensional characters, Gray's protagonist was the reddish blond, curly headed, blue-eyed, good-mannered but high-tempered orphan, Annie. She was present from the first day of the strip and was seldom off stage for more than a few days even when recovering from a near fatal accident—which was fairly frequent—or suffering from amnesia.

The story opened with Annie in a home for orphans run by Miss Asthma, a dour, severe disciplinarian. Annie had been an occupant of the home since infancy. When later asked the first thing she remembered, she replied,

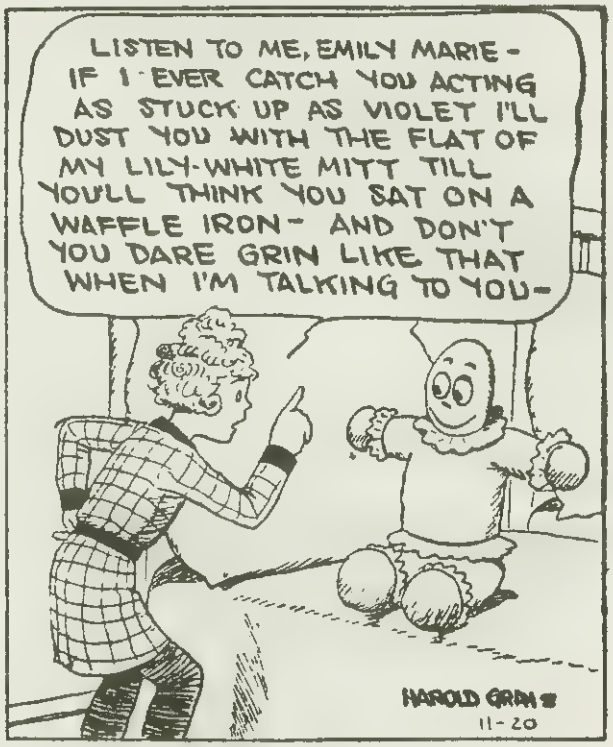
> *Bein' in th' "Home" and how mean Miss Asthma was. I guess I must have been there, right from th' time I was born, almost.*

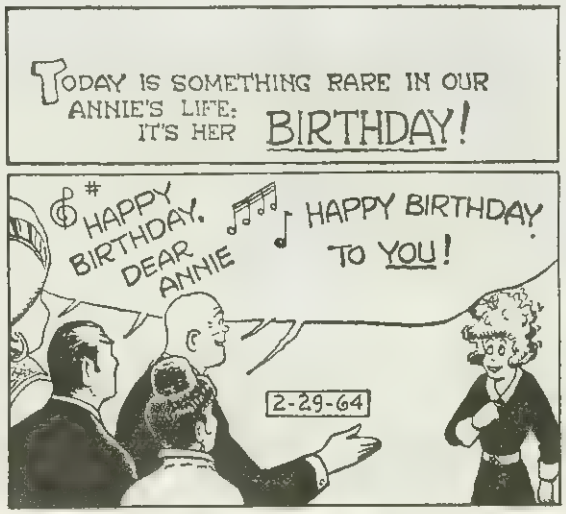
Family records existed in Miss Asthma's safe; indeed, on one occasion, Annie came close to overhearing details of her family history. But the records were destroyed in the fire which gutted the home on November 18, 1928 and not even "Daddy" was able to persuade Miss Asthma to reveal what she remembered, beyond the comment that Annie had been left as a waif at the door of the home.

Years later Lily Hu Shee used her occult powers to tell Annie she had been born on Sunday, February 29th and was, in January 1963, halfway between her tenth and eleventh birthdays. Reckoning back by leap years this meant Annie had been born on Sunday, February 29, 1920. Whether this was a reference to the time Gray first thought of his comic theme or just a fanciful explanation of why Annie had aged so slowly is open to speculation.

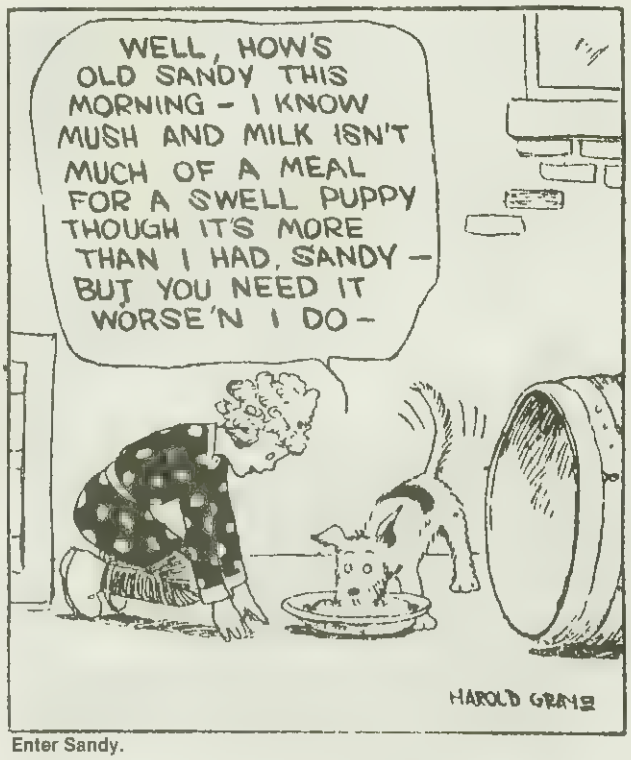
Annie's earliest confidant was a plain rag doll named Emily Marie who first appeared in November 1924 and was the earliest audience of Annie's monologues. Though Emily Marie was used in advertising as late as 1928 she had faded from the strip by early 1927, either lost or stolen. In a nostalgic moment in 1966 Annie remembered her.

The doll was gradually replaced by a dog. In January 1925 Annie rescued a small pup which was being teased by a group of boys behind Mrs. Bottle's store. The pup was a sandy-colored mongrel, part Airedale, part Collie—later expanded to "dozens o' breeds!"—with a black left ear, a black patch on its back and a white tip on its tail. Annie named him Sandy. Since she was not allowed to bring the pup into the Bottle home where she was staying at the time, she entrusted him to the care of Paddy Lynch. There he remained when Annie fled the Bottle home on her first "road" trip. In the course of that first journey Annie was kidnapped by a group of Gypsies. As she was being abused, a full grown Sandy came to the rescue. From then on, with occasional short intervals, the two were inseparable.


LISTEN TO ME, EMILY MARIE - IF I EVER CATCH YOU ACTING AS STUCK UP AS VIOLET I'LL DUST YOU WITH THE FLAT OF MY LILY-WHITE MITT TILL YOU'LL THINK YOU SAT ON A WAFFLE IRON - AND DON'T YOU DARE GRIN LIKE THAT WHEN I'M TALKING TO YOU-
HAROLD GRAY
11-20
Before Sandy, there was Emily Marie.



In 1956 Stephen P. Ryan referred to Sandy as a "most unintelligent" dog since he was "limited to a one word vocabulary: 'arf'." One correspondent took exception to the sarcasm and humorously chided, "I find this true of most dogs." Actually Sandy was portrayed as a very intelligent dog who knew "over a hundred tricks," was smart enough to avoid being poisoned and clever enough to draw attention to an injured Annie. At times he was portrayed with abilities which clearly exceeded canine limits, such as conferring with other dogs in his pursuit of a kidnapped Annie or pushing a meal button without previous conditioning.


WELL, HOW'S OLD SANDY THIS MORNING - I KNOW MUSH AND MILK ISN'T MUCH OF A MEAL FOR A SWELL PUPPY THOUGH IT'S MORE THAN I HAD, SANDY - BUT YOU NEED IT WORSE'N I DO -
HAROLD GRAY

Enter Sandy.

But he needed all the skills he possessed for he had to survive many close brushes with death, including the time he was run down by Elmer Pinchpenny's car and Gray received a telegram from Henry Ford:

PLEASE DO ALL YOU CAN TO HELP ANNIE FIND SANDY STOP WE ARE ALL INTERESTED

Another exceptionally talented companion was Elwood, the master pick-pocket monkey who first appeared in February, 1962, and very quickly established his usefulness by eliminating a group of spies with a hand-grenade. Annie provided him with clothes and a magician's top hat. Elwood became larger than life when he won a Carnival in a crap game with three crooks.

OH SANDY YOU MUST PULL THROUGH- YOU'VE JUST GOT TO BEAT IT, SANDY- YOU CAN'T SEE ME, AND YOU CAN'T MOVE, BUT YOU CAN HEAR ME, MAYBE- AND YOU KNOW HOW MUCH I CARE SANDY- YOU'VE GOT TO LIVE-
1-21-33

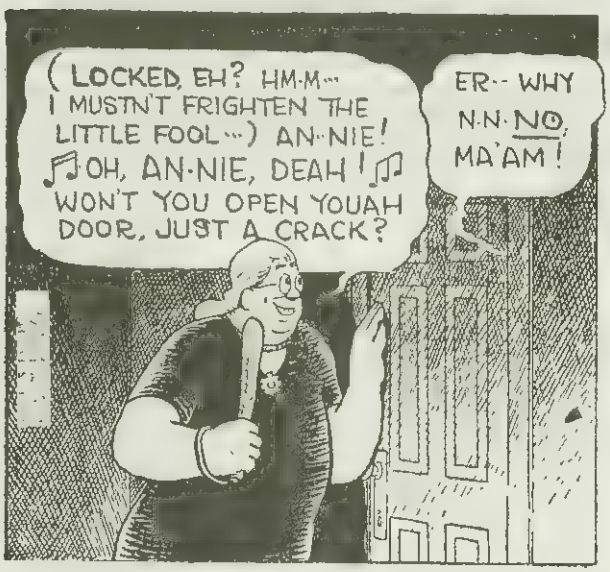
Other animal companions were Grunts, a runt pig adopted during her first stay on the farm of Byron and Mary Silo of Simmons Corners in 1925. Willie, a pet bear whom Annie received as a Christmas present in 1929; and Pee Wee, a circus elephant who appeared in three stories.

Annie's interest in animals was an expression of Gray's concern for the humane interest of animals. Cruelty was severely

GREAT SCOTT! NEAR AS I CAN FIGURE, ELWOOD, WITH THAT GRENADE, JUST ABOUT SAVED MY BACON! A FEW BILLION DOLLARS' WORTH OF "BACON"!
THINK MAYBE Y'COULD AFFORD T'HAVE ELWOOD'S HAT FIXED?
3-3-62

condemned. One early Sunday page expressed strong criticism of those who shot animals "just for fur or fun," though when Annie was bitten by a weasel, the criticism was qualified:

Of course, bein' cruel to dumb animals is wrong. But yuh can get too blamed sentimental 'bout it. Be fair and kind but don't be a sap. From now on I'm going to mix a little common sense with my kindness.



Because of her early experience in the orphan's home Annie had a dread of being sent back to any orphanage. She avoided Miss Asthma at least twice before Mr. Good-deed caught and returned her to the "Home" in August, 1928. The additional mistreatment she received then, and the destruction of the "Home" in a fire which almost took her life, reinforced her determination to roam free.

The introduction of Mr. Good-deed, a very minor character, was an instance of Gray's early distaste for "concerned" citizens who were all too ready to solve social problems by placing children in institutions. Gray believed their concern was not only misdirected; it was often highly hypocritical. Few people received a more biting satire than the "do-gooders" and "busy bodies" who sought to bring about reform by interfering with the personal lives of others. Mrs. J. Bleating-Hart was one of the most extreme. After forcing the removal of Annie from the kindly care of Mrs. Hepzibah Hold, the overly righteous head of the "Child Uplift Group" took Annie as a foster child and shamelessly misused her.

Social workers were also suspect. In her flight from Mrs. J. Bleating-Hart, Annie found herself in the office of Miss Kumquat who was "in charge of child welfare and head of all . . . social uplift." The dialogue between the two is important, for despite Annie's initial apprehension, Gray managed a fairly balanced exchange:

MISS K: *If you won't tell where you're from, or anything about yourself, how can I help you?*
ANNIE: *Er, if it's all th' same, I don't want to be helped.*
MISS K: *Nonsense! I admire your silly, old-fashioned idea that you can be independent. But nowadays you can't just go where you please, or get a job. You* must *be* helped.
ANNIE: *But why* must *I be helped? Why can't I be independent?*
MISS K: *Well, you can't take a* job *at your age. And properly so.*
ANNIE: *But if I'm put into a "Home" or sent to live in some family, I'll be 'spected to* work, *won't I?*
MISS K: *Oh, naturally. You'd want to do all you could to* help.

Gray's "common folk" were often very common . . .

ANNIE: *Then it just added up to me workin' all right, but* for free . . . *to keep my amateur standin', I s'pose!*
MISS K: *Hm-m. You are being extremely difficult, Annie!*
ANNIE: *I've had lots of 'sperience lately with social planners and uplifters. And it's been* all bad!
MISS K: *I can believe that, Annie. We people in my work make plenty of mistakes, of course.*
ANNIE: *Er, you—you mean to say you* admit *it?*
MISS K: *Listen, Annie. The way things are today, youngsters like you are in a spot. And people like me are doing our level best to help you.*
ANNIE: *Sure. I know—but—*
MISS K: *All orphans aren't little angels. You've been around and you know that.*
ANNIE: *I'll say I know that! There are all kinds of us!*
MISS K: *Right! Well, there are all kinds of social workers, too! Good, bad and indifferent. But, of course, they all*

ANNIE, YOU'RE MY KIND OF FOLKS--YES--AND THE KIND MOST OF OUR FOLKS ARE 'ROUND HERE--INDEPENDENT--PROUD--WANT TO WALK ON THEIR OWN LEGS--
HAROLD GRAY
. . . With Gray, rather, it was a community of ideas.

mean well. Unfortunately just meaning *well isn't enough by a long shot. In fact, nothing can be much worse than a well meaning fool!*

Gray had been able to make a positive statement about social workers and child care without altogether abandoning his distaste of "do-gooders." Annie accepted foster placement with Mr. & Mrs. Fubble and found it a pleasant experience even if kindly Mr. Fubble was a lazy, incompetent "windbag" who lived off the money provided by the social service agency.

At other times Gray could display a very positive attitude to orphanages. In early 1925 "Daddy" gave a million dollars to "found a home for waifs, (an) institution to be known as 'Little Annie Home'." In 1928 he bought an estate of over a thousand acres for "a real children's home . . . a place where orphans feel they're welcome, a place that will be run properly." In 1936 kindly old Jack Boot gave a million dollars "to found a *real home* for little orphans . . . to make up to other little Annies for the petty cruelties of officious busy-bodies and professional uplifters." And in 1964 Annie contemplated with approval an orphanage to be established by Rollo and Carmen Rover for they had "*love* for kids, an' understanding!"

But whether operated with kindness or not, orphanages were not for Annie. She preferred to be independent. For her an orhpanage was a form of undesired paternalism.

This concern for independence lay also at the root of Annie's aversion to child-labor regulations, an issue raised during the second World War when Gray was disturbed that many serious social changes were being made as the public's attention was distracted by the war effort. During a stay in the "thieves' den" Annie had broken the law by using a forged birth certificate to secure a part-time job and to get into public school. She later expressed some degree of remorse in a conversation with "Daddy":

"DADDY": *In taking a job at your age, Annie, you evaded the law!*
ANNIE: *I guess that was pretty* bad, *eh?*
"DADDY": *Well, the people who made the law wouldn't think it was* good!
ANNIE: *But I* used *to work for my livin', always, up to now, and it was O.K.*
"DADDY": *The rules get changed pretty fast sometimes, Annie.*
ANNIE: *You can say* that *again!*
"DADDY": *Still the law is the law, no matter what we think of it.*
ANNIE: *I guess I've been pretty bad, usin' tricks to get into school, breakin' th' law to hold a job and earn my way, so I could stay out of th' orphans' "Home."*
"DADDY": *Oh, it was all my fault, really! Not* yours!
ANNIE: *Your fault, "Daddy"?* How?
"DADDY": *I* taught *you to take care of yourself, to be independent! The way I was raised!*

Independence was an important concept for Gray, in a sense much more basic than the "law and order" mentality with

which he is frequently identified. Gray was a Romantic who placed the individual above the collective whole and resented almost any State intervention in the private life of the average citizen. In this connection Stephen Becker's rather imprecise reference to Gray's "severe Calvinism," in *Comic Art in America*, a comment oft repeated by other critics, needs careful analysis. Whatever may be said about some later Calvinists, John Calvin himself never placed the individual above legitimate government authority. And he certainly would never have condoned the individual citizen, however well intentioned, taking the law into his own hand as Gray so often suggested.

To be sure, Gray acknowledged a perverse form of independence. In 1966 and 1967 when he used the person of Clifton the hippie to portray the irrational and highly destructive elements of the counter-culture, Annie commented on Clifton's behavior:

Y'KNOW, CLIFTON, I ADMIRE YOU! CUTTIN' OUT IN TH' EIGHTH GRADE! WHAT'D Y'MISS? LOT OF CRAZY STUFF! WHO NEEDS IT?
YEAH! LIKE HIST'RY AND ENGLISH AND GARBAGE LIKE THAT!

His mother does his laundry; leaves hot meals outside his door? Huh! He's "Independent"? He's just plain irresponsible!

But this didn't diminish Gray's distaste for State interference in the rights of the individual.

Though Gray's concern about the preservation of individual rights amid an ever increasing government bureaucracy was shared by many people—of differing political persuasions—his satire was strained when directed against *child* legislation. Annie as a juvenile was in no position to assume the full responsibility of adult life. Moreover, the child labor laws which Gray criticized were not directed against the afterschool or Saturday part-time work Annie was actually doing!

One questions whether any State can realistically withdraw itself from the regulation of social behavior to the extent proposed by Gray. Independence is commendable but a completely *laissez faire* lifestyle is an invitation to social disaster.

"Daddy" shed his henpecked image early.

THAT'S GREAT- SPRING SOME MORE FUNNY ONES- NOW YOU'VE GOT 30 SECONDS TO DO THREE THINGS- SEE? OPEN YER PAN AFTERWARDS ABOUT THIS AND YOU'LL BE IN STIR FOR THE NEXT THOUSAND YEARS- AND I DON'T MEAN, MAYBE-
NOW ANNIE- REMEMBER THIS IS OUR SECRET- NOT A WORD TO ANYONE EVER- KEEP IT DARK AS A CLOUD OF INK-
GEE, WHAT A BIG, STRONG DADDY YOU ARE- WE FIXED HIM, DIDN'T WE?
HAROLD GRAY

Warbucks and Friends. . .Fact and Fantasy

Much of the controversy surrounding Gray's strip was centered upon the character of Oliver Warbucks who made his first appearance on September 26, 1924, fully seven weeks after the strip began. Even though "Daddy" was absent for long periods of time and seriously injured or presumed dead more than once, his personality was a dominant force.

However, he was not the one-dimensional character many critics judged him to be. In his debut, he arrived home from Buenos Aires, and Annie was told that he had made his wealth during the war as an unscrupulous armament dealer who detested children. The domestic staff was overwhelming in its criticism:

"The Marster can be very 'orrid hat times, hi assure you," said the butler.

"He's a tough bur-rd, Miss Annie," added the cook.

"He's a ten minute egg all right. I got lippy one night and he busts me nose and four ribs. *Don't talk to him.* That's my advice, Miss Annie," warned the chauffeur.

"He doesn't like anyone. I don't think he even spoke to *me* since I've been here," complained Marie, the maid.

Kind-hearted Miss Fair tried to allay Annie's apprehension by looking on the better side but even she had her misgivings:

He is very gruff and lots of people don't like him. But I never thought he was mean. In fact I was always a little sorry for him. He seems so alone. And I suspect that deep down inside he'd really like to be friendly. But he's so rough he scares most people away. Under a rough exterior I think he is a real gentleman. I never liked his making his money out of the war. But it's not up to us to judge him. But don't worry, Annie. I'm sure he can't help liking you.

Miss Fair was right. Despite Warbucks's coarse and rude behavior, he and Annie were drawn irresistibly to one another. Both were ready to settle disputes with their fists. After watching Annie sock a young bully, "Daddy" commended her: "At a girl, Annie. A straight left turneth away wrath." A few days later he took her with him when he went to persuade a loan-shark named Spyder not to foreclose on impecunious Miss Fair. "Daddy" not only bought the mortgage, he smashed Spyder to the floor with a hard left.

This hard-nosed, no-nonsense attitude to bullies, crooks, and hypocrites persisted through the years, adding much to both the popularity and controversial nature of the strip. Gray had the ability to set up his villains so that most people could identify with the hapless victim and rejoice when the wrong-doer received punishment. And it mattered little whether the villain was the hypocritical banker who gave money for a Church organ while exploiting the poor, or the union agitator provoking a needless riot.

"Daddy" and Annie were also drawn together through a common loyalty to their plebeian roots. Warbucks began as a more outspoken version of George McManus's Jiggs. Instead of sneaking out to Dinty Moore's for corned beef and cabbage, Warbucks ordered the butler to keep the table stocked with pig's knuckles and sauerkraut. Instead of slinking off for a card game with the boys as Maggie attended the opera, "Daddy" encouraged Mrs. Warbucks to attend her "Rooshun drama" while he and Annie took in a "swell vaudeville show." Initially at least, he preferred to go about the house with "suspenders and brass collar button and carpet slippers. . .red sleeve bands and. . .stinking old pipe." He detested his wife's condescending attitude to Annie and loathed her socialite friends who spent their time talking down their neighbors. "Daddy" was a hero not so much because he was a rich businessman but because he respected his roots.

And his roots were menial. Very early in the strip he unburdened himself to Annie:

Ever since I can remember, Annie, I've been alone same as you. Nobody ever helped me. I had to help myself. See? The wife and I had pretty rough going. I had a little

DID YOU HEAR THE LATEST ABOUT THE SNEAGLES?
OH, IT'S ALMOST TOO AWFUL TO REPEAT-
THE SNEAGLES OF ALL PEOPLE-
OF COURSE IT'S ONLY A RUMOR BUT AS MRS SCUDDLETON SAYS ——
OH I COULD HARDLY BELIEVE IT- AND THE SNEAGLES HAVE ALWAYS BEEN THOUGHT SO RESPECTIBLE- TEE-HEE
THEY OUGHT TO BE RUN OUT OF TOWN-
SAY- WHO ARE YOUR FRIENDS? IF YOU INVITED 'EM HERE ON MY ACCOUNT YOU CAN INVITE 'EM TO LEAVE ANY TIME — SEE?
A SWELL EXAMPLE YOU'RE SETTING FOR ANNIE YOU AND YOUR ANVIL CHORUS PALS- IF I CATCH THOSE MAGPIES IN THIS HOUSE AGAIN I'LL SHOOT 'EM -

ABOVE AND BELOW: There was a Mrs. Warbucks, a forgotten motivation, perhaps, for "Daddy's" wanderings around the globe!

machine shop. Then the war came along. I was too old to fight but I wanted to do my bit so I made munitions. Well, I made a fortune, too and everybody hates me for it. Maybe I did wrong, Annie, but I did the best I knew. I thought money would make the Mrs. happy. I thought she'd be proud of me. But I guess I was wrong, Annie. I've made nothing but mistakes all my life.

An extensive, though not wholly consistent, biography of Warbucks can be pieced together from bits of information found in the strip: he was born about 1894, near the small town of Supine. His father, a section boss on the railroad, was killed when he was a month old. His mother was left with only ' gumption" and a house in which she was able to keep boarders. His early youth in Supine involved cornering all the marbles in town at age nine, serving as a messenger for the telegraph company, having a girl friend named Millie, fishing, swimming and raiding melon patches with Spike Spangle and beating up the son of the banker who planned to foreclose on his mother's house. Then on June 7, 1905 when he was only 11, his mother died at age 30, of typhoid. On the night of the funeral he was put on the outbound Limited. Presumably he later spent some time in the city for he and Paddy Cairns were companions together in the old 8th Ward.

For a few semesters he attended college studying engineering but found no time for football or girls because he had to work seven nights a week and Sundays in the local steel mill to pay off a debt. His family background and lack of prep school education kept him from entering a fraternity. He eventually became foreman in the rolling mill, married Mrs. Warbucks, worked and planned for a family, kids and house of their own. When "Daddy" began to make big money the marital happiness was lost but he retained his identity with the common people. In the words of his boyhood chum, Mike Madigan:

Ye've always loved th' teemin' millions who never earn more'n a meagre living;. But ye never yearned or struggled to be wan of 'em! Ye started yir life here in poverty. And have been iver satisfied to earn and spind millions, not to give indlessly to attain mediocrity! But at heart ye are one of us ordinary wans. Y'can niver change!

"Daddy's" empathy for the poor was indicative of Gray's sympathetic treatment of any who suffered from racial or social snobbery. The very early portrayal of Annie and "Daddy" against the pretensions of the rich and *nouveau-riche* was followed by an extended treatment of the native integrity of America over against the phony sophistication of Europe. Mrs. Warbucks arrived home from abroad on August 4, 1925 with Selby Adlebert Piffleberry of the Herring Piffleberrys, a thoroughly objectionable young prig who urged Mrs. Warbucks to "ignore the little blighter." But Annie won out. She noted that Selby's initials spelled out his true character: SAP. And to cinch the issue she trounced him in a fist fight.

A second European representative then appeared on the scene in the person of Count de Tour, a polished Parisian businessman. Selby assured Mrs. Warbucks that within a few years the Count would crush all competition and be the world's financial dictator. He was remorseless in a business war. The Count in turn advised Mrs. Warbucks:

Why, my dear lady, you are wasting the best years of your life in this stagnant pool—this America. Think what a woman of your charm and poise could be in any of the great capitals of Europe. Why, madam, you could be a Queen.

But the slick Count ran into tough competition. When he colddecked the cards, Warbucks outwitted him. When he challenged "Daddy" to a duel, hoping to use rapiers to dispose of his unskilled opponent, Warbucks responded to the slap of the glove in a more direct fashion. He slammed the Count to the floor. And Annie completed the job by kicking de Tour in the shins when he bad-mouthed "Daddy."

However, this didn't prevent Gray from later criticizing the native simplicity of America, at least as it expressed itself in Pilgrim mistreatment of witches and Indians. Gray was particularly sympathetic to the Indian people of North America, though not in a saccharin way. In 1956 Annie reflected at length on the Indians' treatment in history books:

Take our history. Injuns were bad! They massacred th' noble white folks! Burned houses, stole horses an' cattle! But white folks were good, o' course. Well, an Injun who knocked off a few whites wasn't a bad guy to other Injuns. To them all white folks were killers, stealin' their land. Always like that. Our gang's right, they're wrong!

OH, OLIVER HERE'S THE WONDERFUL SURPRISE I WIRED YOU OF- THIS IS DEAR LITTLE SELBY ADLEBERT PIFFLEBERRY OF THE HERRING PIFFLEBERRYS - HE'S REALLY A LITTLE GENIUS-
UH HUH-

THERE - ONLY A CUR WOULD ALLOW SUCH AN INSULT TO PASS UNCHALLENGED - SO IF YOU ARE A GENTLEMAN -
SMACK!
SLAP ME ON TH' JAW, WILL YUH ? DUEL, IS IT ? I'LL GIVE YUH ALL TH DUEL YOU WANT RIGHT NOW - HOW DYE LIKE IT ?
WOWIE!

Turning the other cheek.

In 1963 Gray drew a contrast between the pretension of Aunt Agatha, who traced her ancestry back to Plymouth, and the quiet integrity of the Indian Hairy Wolf:

AUNT AGATHA: My *family reached Americah in 1630, helped wipe out the ignorant savages and civilize this land of ouahs! In* ouah *family, we're proud to refeah to ourselves as "the* first Americans"*! What country did* your *people come from?*

HAIRY WOLF: *From Asia, via Bering Strait. My people were living in America over fifteen thousand years before Columbus arrived here!*

AUNT AGATHA: *Y-Y-YOU'RE an* INDIAN?

HAIRY WOLF: *Yep! But we "savages" are always glad to meet another "FIRST AMERICAN"!*

Nor did Gray spare the Revolutionary patriots of 1776! In the 1945 Tidnap story he challenged the standard view of American history that "the Tories were bad and the patriots all were brave and good."

Despite Gray's early criticism of European sophistication, he expressed a positive attitude to "foreigners," especially immigrants and refugees. As early as January 1926 Annie challenged a disparaging remark about Wops made by one of Paddy Cairns's flunkies, "Wop is it? I'll *wop* yuh one on th' nut, I will." And Paddy agreed: "That foreigner stuff is out with me too, Annie. Breed or creed doesn't count with regular folks." Gray was particularly sympathetic to the difficulties immigrants had with the English language. In Annie's words:

> *A lot o' folks hear some furriner messin' up th' English language an' figger he's dumb when, most likely, he can talk swell in four or five other lingos already, and will have English down pat too 'fore long. They're not th' dummies. They've been around.*

Perhaps even more surprising for the time, Gray very early voiced support for blacks. When a black cook gave Annie some food, she commented to Sandy, "That just goes to show yuh, Sandy. Just 'cause a bird isn't our color is no sign he isn't RIGHT." And about Lincoln the Great Emancipator she remarked, "What color folks were, or where they came from, didn't cut any ice with him . . . He stuck up for the colored people." However, Gray did depict blacks exclusively in servant capacities.

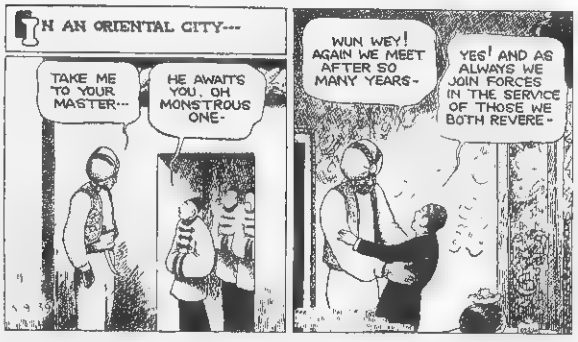
There is evidence of an early sympathetic portrayal of Jewish people as well, in 1931 to Jake the shopkeeper and in 1955 to Sol and Becky, operators of a small tailor shop. In 1943 Jews were explicitly included in a long list of people who were "makin' real Americanism."

The one major exception was Gray's treatment of the Japanese during World War II. Though he could made a distinction between German nationality and Nazism, he made no such distinction with regard to the Japanese, and some of his comments were quite vicious: "those dirty Japs," "those chatterin' tailless apes," and "those little slant-eyed baboons."

Despite a general openness to other nationalities and an awareness of American hypocrisies, Gray at times could express a popular belief that Americans were quite unique in their experience of freedom. In the words of Lily Hu Shee on November 14, 1962, "There are several (countries) far larger, but none one-tenth so free and wonderful." Canadians, in particular, have found such comments severely condescending. Gray's intense patriotism could sometimes express the snobbery he detested in others.

Though the earthy realism of the strip and its biting social comment was never lost, it was gradually embellished by attributes of fantasy. "Daddy" was gradually depicted as one who had spent his early life adventuring around the globe, something at variance with his long, hard rise from poverty.

The growth of fantasy included the introduction of several mysterious characters from the East, one of the earliest being Wun Wey, a wealthy Mandarin from one of the oldest families in China. Wun Wey held degrees from Oxford and two leading American Universities and was perfectly fluent in at least eight languages. Though insulted by Warbucks's second wife, Trixie, Wun Wey remained loyal to "Daddy." During Warbucks's long voyage with Trixie, Wun Wey sent agents to check on Annie's well-being, and while "Daddy" was serving his prison term, he helped rescue Annie from sure death at the hands of Boris Bleek. On Sept. 1, 1935 he returned to the strip to report that he had located treasure in Warbucks's Oriental holdings that made "Daddy" rich beyond the bounds of any dreams." Before


N AN ORIENTAL CITY---
TAKE ME TO YOUR MASTER--
HE AWAITS YOU, OH MONSTROUS ONE-
WUN WEY! AGAIN WE MEET AFTER SO MANY YEARS-
YES! AND AS ALWAYS WE JOIN FORCES IN THE SERVICE OF THOSE WE BOTH REVERE-

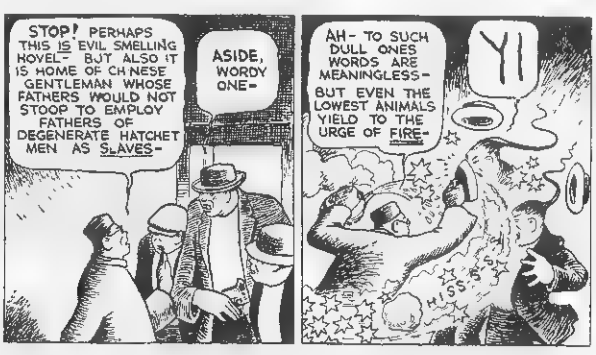
The fight against evil could involve as well the Mysterious Elite . . .

"Daddy" left to check these holdings he arranged for Wun Wey to take Annie to a small private school. But before the order could be carried out Wun Wey and Annie were waylaid by Oriental "hatchet men," and he was taken back to China where he was eventually rescued by The Asp. He re-appeared in the strip on May 9, 1939 when Punjab visited China to recruit his help in rescuing Annie from the evil Axel. His only other involvement was in China during the Second World War when he rescued "Daddy," Punjab and The Asp from a firing squad and then led them back to the Chinese lines.

Though Orientals could be sinister villains, Gray's portrayal of them in general was highly positive, if not always for the best reason. He could present the unnamed Chinese laundryman giving his life to protect Annie but on the whole he seemed to admire Orientals and their cultures for their tough treatment of evil-doers.

A much more dominant character appeared on February 3, 1935 in the person of Punjab, the turbanned practitioner of magic who stood over eight feet tall, perhaps nine, spoke at least seven languages, possessed tremendous physical

. . . Or, again, good old-fashioned muscle.


STOP! PERHAPS THIS IS EVIL SMELLING HOVEL- BUT ALSO IT IS HOME OF CHINESE GENTLEMAN WHOSE FATHERS WOULD NOT STOOP TO EMPLOY FATHERS OF DEGENERATE HATCHET MEN AS SLAVES-
ASIDE, WORDY ONE-
AH- TO SUCH DULL ONES WORDS ARE MEANINGLESS- BUT EVEN THE LOWEST ANIMALS YIELD TO THE URGE OF FIRE-
YI
HISS

IN ISTANBUL A MESSENGER KNOCKS AT A DOOR, DELIVERS A RADIOGRAM---
IT IS BUT A ROUTINE MESSAGE, IT APPEARS-
THE ASP WILL DETERMINE THAT POINT, KEMAL---
5-10-39

strength, and even greater mental ability, was able to appear instantly in response to a special whistle, and make people and animals disappear by means of mysterious incantations and a magic blanket. Punjab became "Daddy's" principal right-hand man, making appearances almost every year.

If Wun Wey and Punjab represented the mystery of China and India respectively, The Asp, who first appeared on February 21, 1937, *may* have represented the severe justice of the Islamic world, a quality sympathetically portrayed by Gray. This "Grim Reaper" possessed a burning desire to mete out strict punishment.

Lily Hu Shee made her first appearance during the early stage of American active involvement in Viet Nam and combined the talents of "fortune teller, mind reader and Oriental mystic," along with the ability to speak in many languages. Though she was born in Singapore she had associations with Indo-China. Her uncle How Kum was summoned from a small Indo-Chinese village to help restore Annie's memory when all other means, including modern psychiatry, had failed. How Kum wasn't a magician or a holy man, simply "a very wise and humble soul." Despite this he had "traveled the earth, attended many great universities, lived in many lands, mingled with many races." He even possessed the ability to talk with animals.

The most mysterious of all Gray's characters was Mr. Am, who was reputed to have lived from eternity as the possessor of "*all* the wisdom of the ages." He was a practitioner of magic who was able to enter the fourth dimension and restore people to life, even those riddled with bullets. Yet his prediction of Annie's safety was, on one occasion, inaccurate.

Fantasy was carried yet one step further with the introduction of spirits and ghosts. In 1937 Annie investigated a "haunted" house in which Sandy had been living. It turned out to be the residence of Mr. Arundal Blade, a wealthy recluse. The presence of some very forceful ghosts was clearly suggested though never visually portrayed.

A far more firmly developed spirit world was presented eight years later in a story involving Professor and Mrs. George Toggle and Annie on Spook Island. The three were being held prisoners by Mr. Thaddeus T. Tidnab, mystery man of international business in the ancestral home of Lord Twifflepip, Tory martyr of the Revolutionary War. The long-deceased lord appeared as a shade figure visible and audible only to Annie.

Spirit beings came again in August 1950 when Annie and Lightnin' Lem came across "th' speerit o' 'Windy' Hill, '49er." "Windy" informed Annie that only "th' pure in speerit" possessed the special power to see and hear spirits. But "Windy" was of very great *material* help when he led Annie to a vital source of water.

In August 1954 Annie met a mind-reading magician, Professor Rees, who had learned many of his tricks from an old Hindu. Through the Professor she became a resident in the home of mysterious Mr. Ninety and found an attic full of spooks.

LEAPIN' LIZARDS! FOOTSTEPS ON THE STAIRS--- AUNTIE ACID!
QUICK! THIS WAY! HIDE!
SHUCKS! I GOT A RIGHT UP HERE--WHY SHOULD I BE SCARED O' HER?
THIS OLD TRUNK--QUICK!
DON'T ASK QUESTIONS--
IT'S EMPTY--INSIDE!

From ghosts and spooks Gray turned in 1955 to leprechauns. While walking through Supine's cemetery, Annie helped an unconscious leprechaun named Leppy. In gratitude he gave Annie a wish which she immediately made that the life of Mike Madigan's wife Katy be spared. This challenged Leppy to his limits but not only did he arrange Katy's recovery; he gave his bag of gold to ensure the Madigans could pay their hospital bills and mortgage. Unlike the spooks Leppy was visible to people other than Annie.

Dreams occurred frequently and were sometimes treated as the natural imagination of the mind. Thus Annie could resolve,

AT A DEAD END IN THE SEARCH FOR A MEDICAL CURE FOR ANNIE'S LOSS OF MEMORY, LILY HU SHE ASKS PERMISSION TO TRY ONE OTHER POSSIBLE SOLUTION!
YOU SAY ON THAT PHONE ONE MAY REACH ANY SPOT ON EARTH?
YES, WITHIN MOMENTS!
2-3-64
IT IS PERHAPS ONLY A WILD, FOOLISH IDEA; BUT MAY I CALL AN UNCLE OF MINE, IN A SMALL VILLAGE IN INDOCHINA?
OF COURSE: GIVE ME HIS NAME, AND THE VILLAGE, AND I'LL ORDER THE CIRCUITS CLEARED FOR YOU!
© 1964 by News Syndicate Co. Inc.
A FEW MOMENTS LATER, HALF WAY 'ROUND THE WORLD, A MUTED BELL TINKLES SOFTLY AND AN OLD MAN ANSWERS ...
YES: THIS ONE WHO SPEAKS IS HOW KUM!
HAROLD GRAY

A-A REAL LEPRECHAUN! LEAPIN' LIZARDS! BUT PEOPLE SAY THERE ARE NO LEPRECHAUNS—
THE WUR-R-RLD IS FULL O' DULL-WITTED, HALF-BLIND DOLTS WITH NO PERCIPTION— AND LESS HEART—
BESIDES—THERE'S ONLY A FEW OF US LEFT— YE'D HAVE NIVER SEEN ME— EXCEPT FOR ME ACCIDENT— :.
THE "PENNIES FROM HEAVEN," ALL DROPPED IN A BAG—
YIS—THE TIN AND —TWINTY GOLD PIECE "PENNIES" I ORDERED—
WOW! A FORTUNE!
HAROLD GRA.

"*I'm* goin' to make *my* dreams into ideas. Yessir. I'm goin' somewhere." Dreams could also be the relatively innocent expressions of make-believe. Again in Annie's words, "I guess it's dreams that make life bearable for lots o' folks."

At other times dreams were premonitions of impending disaster or joy. Annie referred to dreams as early as September 12, 1924 but in April 1925 she observed, "They say when you dream about somebody you're going to meet 'em." And this sometimes proved true. Her dreams were used to predict the arrival of Sandy on more than one occasion. Even Sandy seemed able to sense the imminent arrival of people.

Magic was a power or skill possessed by several characters in addition to those already mentioned: Humid the hobo mystic, who frightened Annie with predictions of doom; Gypsy Belle, the kind-hearted witch of Buckleville who advised Annie to do her good work without letting the uplifters and reformers know what she was doing; and the benevolent, mind-reading card-shark Professor Rees. And for a while, at least, Annie possessed a magic whistle which could summon Punjab in emergencies.

On occasion it was suggested that magic was not real. As Annie put it, "I guess lots o' things look like magic, if y'don't unnerstand 'em too well." And there was Mr. Am's admonition that "magic should be used only for fun" though his habit of making undesirables disappear was hardly a laughing matter for the victims.

Superstitions were frequently mentioned in the strip: Friday the 13th, black cats, walking under ladders, broken mirrors, spilled salt, and a bird in the room. Annie once expressed disbelief in "that kind of bunk" but immediately tripped. She later expressed no desire to test the matter:

> *I still think Friday th' 13th had nothin' to do with that. But just th' same, anybody's a sucker to risk their neck to prove there's no such thing as bad luck.*

The use of the occult in semi-religious spiritualism was also treated with caution. Mr. Arundal Blade told Annie:

> *I'm not a spiritualist in any accepted sense of the word. Neither do I believe in what you call spooks or goblins . . . I don't pretend to know a great deal, but this I do know. There is a lot that is beyond the comprehension of any of us. Charlatans and fakers fatten on that fact. I am not one of that breed's customers. But the spirit in some is strong. In the Blades it has been very strong. Is it odd to you that such vital souls tarry here a while, perhaps?*

Annie's response perhaps reflected Gray's own ambivalence on the subject, "If anything is too hot to handle, *LEAVE IT ALONE*! Still, it's a doggoned fascinatin' thing to think about."

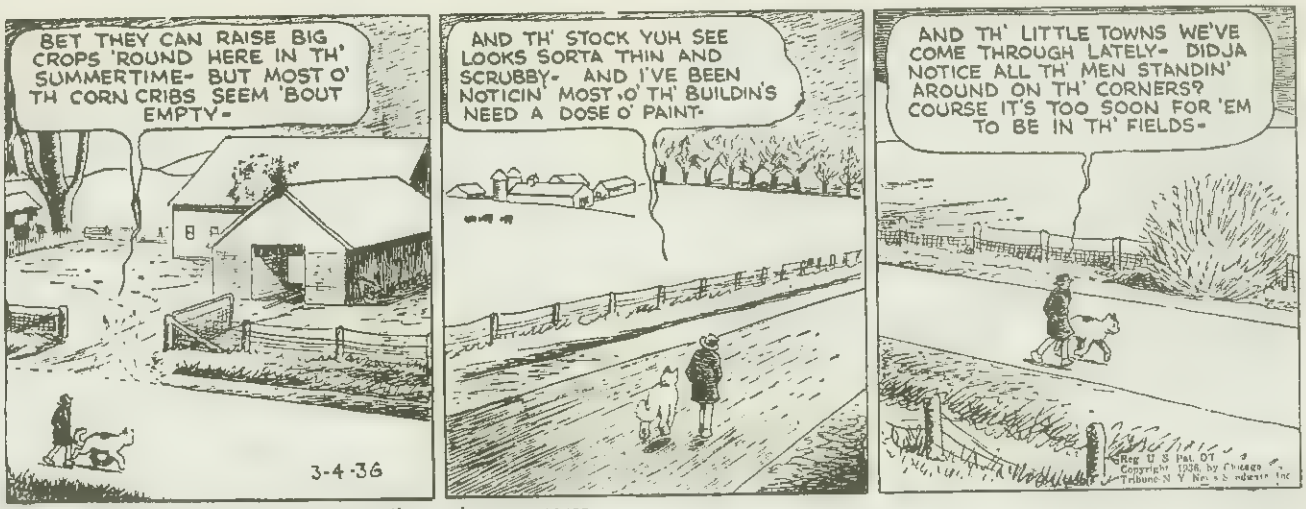
Though the use of fantasy was often nothing more than a romantic interest in distant places and unique abilities, and though the use of occult powers was accompanied by a tinge of doubt, Gray used the blend of fact and fantasy to enhance his atmosphere of mystery and suspense.

Style and Substance

Though many disparaging remarks have been made of Gray's artistic and literary style, he was a much more talented craftsman than is generally realized or acknowledged in terms of both art and writing.

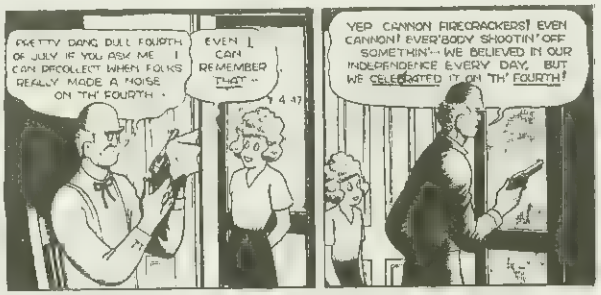
In April 1935 William E. Berchtold described Gray as "a mediocre artist" producing "crudely drawn characters." The comment has an element of truth, for Gray's art never wholly lost its rudimentary quality. On many occasions there was little action, indeed very little composition or change of perspective. As Jules Feiffer and Garry Trudeau would do in later years, Gray placed strong emphasis upon narrative values.

THEY THINK THEY'RE ALL ALONE- HAVEN'T AN IDEA WE'RE FILMING EVERY MOVE- 'LIFE OF A LITTLE NATIVE PRINCESS AT HOME', EH? AND DOES SHE ENTER INTO THE SPIRIT OF THE THING? LOOK AT HER-
THIS IS GOING TO MAKE A CORKING, PICTURE, MR. GAMBLE-
12-5-35
THAT KID'S GOT IMAGINATION- LOOK AT HER STRUT AROUND AND POSE- SHE'S COCKY ENOUGH FOR A PRINCESS-- HA! GREAT SCOTT- LOOK! THAT GREAT BEAST- HE'S KNEELING BEFORE HER- GET THAT!
I'M GETTIN' IT ALL, MR. GAMBLE-
AND LOOK- PEE WEE- HE'S STANDING ON HIS HEAD- THIS IS MARVELOUS- BOY, OH BOY- NATIVE PRINCESS WITH A GIGANTIC, MURDEROUS ELEPHANT FOR A TOY- A GREAT BRUTE THAT LOVES HER AND FAWNS BEFORE HER LIKE A LITTLE PUPPY-
THIS STUFF WILL BE A SENSATION, MR. GAMBLE-


BET THEY CAN RAISE BIG CROPS 'ROUND HERE IN TH' SUMMERTIME- BUT MOST O' TH CORN CRIBS SEEM 'BOUT EMPTY-
3-4-36
AND TH' STOCK YUH SEE LOOKS SORTA THIN AND SCRUBBY- AND I'VE BEEN NOTICIN' MOST O' TH' BUILDIN'S NEED A DOSE O' PAINT-
AND TH' LITTLE TOWNS WE'VE COME THROUGH LATELY- DIDJA NOTICE ALL TH' MEN STANDIN' AROUND ON TH' CORNERS? COURSE IT'S TOO SOON FOR 'EM TO BE IN TH' FIELDS-

The world of Harold Gray: long-shots sometimes, close-ups never.

A fair assessment of the artwork, however, must take other facts into consideration. In the first place his style was developed during a period in which comic art was predominantly non-realistic. Gray's art certainly improved over the years


PRETTY DANG DULL FOURTH OF JULY IF YOU ASK ME - I CAN RECOLLECT WHEN FOLKS REALLY MADE A NOISE ON TH' FOURTH -
EVEN I CAN REMEMBER THAT -
YEP CANNON FIRECRACKERS! EVEN CANNON! EVER'BODY SHOOTIN' OFF SOMETHIN'-- WE BELIEVED IN OUR INDEPENDENCE EVERY DAY, BUT WE CELEBRATED IT ON TH' FOURTH!

Pupils: They flunked the test.

but his style was so firmly defined by the early 1930s one might question whether a transition to a more realistic style, even if Gray had been capable of the feat, might not have destroyed the distinctive quality of his work.

A minor example is the controversial blank eyes. Berchtold mentioned them as did a number of other critics. Perhaps in response to such criticism, Gray gave Annie pupils for a day as early as April 12, 1941 and began to use them on a regular basis in 1947. But even this slight modification affected the image of the strip and Gray dropped it.

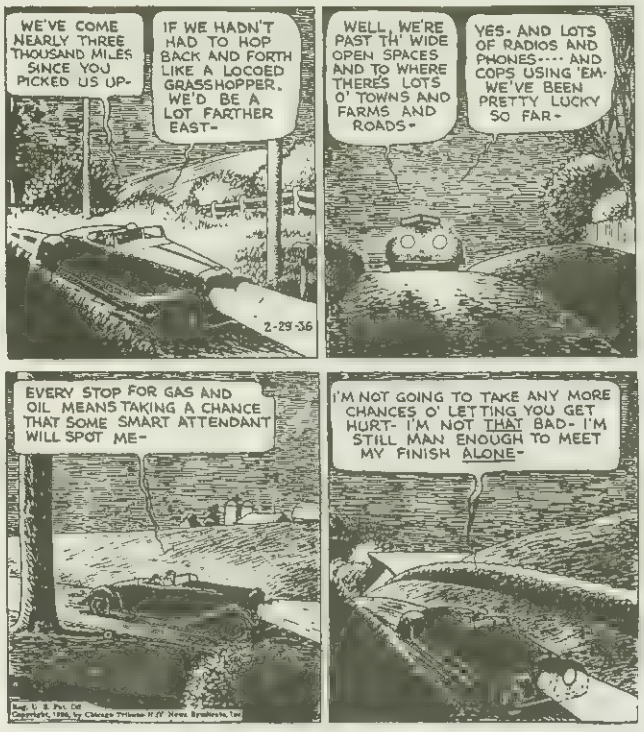
Consideration must also be given to the value of primitive art. Judged by the rigid standard sometimes applied to Gray's style, the work of Grandma Moses would have to be consigned to the trash heap and much native art removed from the galleries. This is not to argue that Gray's art is in the same category as that of Anna Mary Robertson. It is simply to insist that his art should be judged much more fairly. In comparison with the more contemporary and more widely celebrated work of Feiffer and Trudeau, Gray's art could be visually striking.

For example, he made effective use of several standard drawing techniques: Line drawings in which there was a minimum of solid black or shading complementing the linear qualities; frequent use of solid blacks; a variety of shading techniques, including roughly parallel lines, cross-hatching, and textured "scratching."

Gray also made effective use of variation in the angle of his shots. Far less use was made of a variation in the depth of the picture. Most of the action in *Little Orphan Annie* took place at middle-range. Long-range shots were used on occasion, but close-ups seldom, if ever, were employed.

Gray did, on occasion, make striking use of three-dimensional simulations, and he sometimes utilized imaginative "special effects."

WHY, TO THE PLACE WE'RE GOING, ANNIE --- THE PLACE I WAS HEADED FOR BEFORE I HEARD OF YOUR MIXUP WITH "SNORTY" SMITH-
HEY! LOOK OUT!
WHEW! THAT BLUNDERIN' LUBBER NEARLY RAN US DOWN-
YEP! THIS IS JUST A LITTLE UNIMPORTANT FISHING BOAT- (CARRYING TEN BILLION IN GEMS-) BUT A BATTLE CRUISER COULDN'T CARRY SUCH A TREASURE AS SAFELY-
THE WISE TRAVELER WRAPS HIS MONEY IN WORTHLESS RAGS, FOR GREED MAKES MOST MEN ROBBERS-
WOT'S SO ARTY 'BOUT A STINKIN' FISH BOAT, MATEY?
PITCHERSQUE - SEE? I 'PRINTS THESE HERE PITCHERS ON POST CARDS AND STICKS 'EM IN TH' DRUG STORE WINDER-SEE? TOURISTS GOES FOR 'EM- "QUAINT" THEY CALLS 'EM-
HAROLD GRAY
3-30-37


WE'VE COME NEARLY THREE THOUSAND MILES SINCE YOU PICKED US UP-
IF WE HADN'T HAD TO HOP BACK AND FORTH LIKE A LOCOED GRASSHOPPER, WE'D BE A LOT FARTHER EAST-
2-29-36
WELL, WE'RE PAST TH' WIDE OPEN SPACES AND TO WHERE THERE'S LOTS O' TOWNS AND FARMS AND ROADS-
YES- AND LOTS OF RADIOS AND PHONES---- AND COPS USING 'EM- WE'VE BEEN PRETTY LUCKY SO FAR-
EVERY STOP FOR GAS AND OIL MEANS TAKING A CHANCE THAT SOME SMART ATTENDANT WILL SPOT ME-
I'M NOT GOING TO TAKE ANY MORE CHANCES O' LETTING YOU GET HURT- I'M NOT THAT BAD- I'M STILL MAN ENOUGH TO MEET MY FINISH ALONE-

In addressing Gray's literary talent one must realize that he was working in an art form that combines picture and text. This meant the descriptive language of the novelist or short story writer was of secondary importance.

One must also realize that Gray worked within the limits of one of the most severely restrictive literary genres imaginable. He had to tell his story in four (or three, after the mid-'40s) daily panels and 11 or 12 Sunday panels. Each strip or Sunday page had to have a unity within itself and yet form part of a larger whole. The problem was further complicated by a policy followed by The Chicago Tribune-New York News Syndicate that required the Sunday and daily pages be integrated in such a way the story could be followed by people who read only the daily or Sunday pages. The Sunday page had both to review the action of the past six days and to advance the plot; the six daily pages had somehow to review the Sunday page and press further with the story. And all of this without undue repetition! Gray didn't always achieve a smooth coordination but critics should keep the problem in mind.

It was also generally understood that the script would be intelligible to children as well as adults. To a great extent Gray broke with this tradition long before more mature adventure and humor strips became dominant. To use Latin, French, Spanish, and German words or quotations, to discuss such abstract concepts as justice, law, retribution, and reform and then to portray them in very concrete stories, to have a box on his Sunday page filled with quotations ranging from Franklin Pierce Adams to Xenophanes, hardly warranted Becker's charge that Gray was non-intellectual. Despite this Gray was able to keep his script remarkably sharp. Few unnecessary words appear and monosyllables abound.

Following a long-standing American tradition exemplified in the work of Mark Twain, Gray made extensive use of slang. Annie regularly slurred her words: th'(e), t'(o), y'(ou), o'(f), in'(g), (th)'em, oughta, (be)'sides, (a)'way, s'pose, etc. Highly imaginative expletives were used: great sufferin' scissorbills; great Caesar's suspender buttons; great gory goats o'Goshen; by th' seven ringed tail of a migrant milligander; great seven-legged gollywoggles; great gallopin' gallinippers; and great zippered zanies of Zanzibar. Though Annie initially used several expletives, it was Leapin' Lizards which became her trade-mark.

Proper names were used to describe the occupation or moral disposition of the many characters who appeared on Gray's stage. Not only were they a convenient short-hand, they added to the satirical nature of the strip. The full force of their effectiveness can be recognized when a select few are grouped under occupational headings:

Lawyers: Mr. Spyder, Mr. Flam, Timothy J. Jackall, Bert Barrister, Steve Swindell, Springem, Busard, Obadiah Ritt, Simpson Sly, Mr. Locust, Henry Habeus, and "Slip" Slicko.

Judges: Cogg, Hedge, Fudge, Bluster, Seal, Level, and Lon "Fussy" Guffy.

Doctors: Dr. Scalpel, Dr. Lens, Dr. Dose, Dr. Probe, Dr. Pyll, Doc Croak, Dr. Noodle (psychiatrist), Dr. Lance, Dr. Bile, Doc Peptic, Doctor La Quaque (psychiatrist), and Doc Cardio.

BANG!
SMACK
ZOOM!
TRUE, SAHIB--ONE FALSE STEP AND ONE COULD FALL TO NO TELLING WHAT DEPTHS--'TIS MOST UNFORTUNATE THE FLASHLIGHT BATTERIES GAVE OUT---
YES--AND JUST AS WE BROKE THROUGH FROM THE MINE AND THOUGHT WE WERE FREE-
OW!

Some of Gray's rare uses of sound effects.

GREAT COUNTRY UP HERE- NEVER GET ENOUGH OF THESE MOUNTAINS- BIG-STRONG- SILENT- AND THEY CAN BE CRUEL-
I'LL SAY SO- THEY SORTA SCARE ME, SOME TIMES-
HA! HA! THEY DON'T SCARE ME EXACTLY- JUST MAKE ME REALIZE HOW REALLY SMALL AND PUNY ANY MAN IS--- HM-M--- MAKE ME FEEL LIKE A TRANSIENT-
HAROLD GRAY

Teachers: Prof. Flibbergibbet, Miss Strick, Mr. Theorem, Mr. Slate, Miss Verb, Isaac Add, and Miss Chart.

Religious leaders: Deacon Egg-Plant, Deacon Pinocle, Rev. Martin Meek, Collar John, Deacon Doodle, and Rev. Win Wright.

Lawmen: Peter Pincher, Chief Blunderbuss, Deputy Peep, Sheriff Holster, Cal Case (F.B.I. agent), Constable Pounce, George Garden, and Bill Badge.

FOR ONE SPLIT SECOND THE GIANT KILLER GIVES WAY BEFORE THE SHOCK OF SANDY'S SURPRISE ATTACK---
BUT THE GREAT BRUTE HAS FOUR TIMES THE SIZE AND STRENGTH OF POOR OLD SANDY---
12-13-38
IT IS A HOPELESS AND ONE-SIDED BATTLE-THE HOUND REARS TO HIS FEET, SWINGING SANDY AS HE WOULD A KITTEN---
'ROUND HE SWINGS, AND SANDY IS CRASHED INTO A TREE TO FALL LIKE AN EMPTY SACK---
HAROLD GRAY

Newspapermen: Al Agate, Horation Hack, Jack Scrip, Abner Skoop, Paul Proof, Harry Hack, Gus Gazette, Paul Pica, Ira Italic, Billy Biline, and William Tell.

Businessmen: Tom Bullion, Phineas P. Pinchpenny, Caleb Shopp, Mr. Forge, Mr. Kolassal, and Jack Boot.

In November 1941 Gray tried a variation of this technique, one which had been used for some time by his associate at *The Chicago Tribune*, *Dick Tracy*'s Chester Gould: to create a name by spelling a trait in reverse. The list is extensive so only a few will be given in illustration: Dr. Eldeen; Thaddeus T. Tidnab; Judge Caleb Knits; Gib Poocs, reporter; Mrs. McWoc, social leader; Eddie Ekat, assistant D.A.; "Stud" Rekop, gambler; Sam Swen, editor; Don Levon, writer; and Thurston Tar.

Extensive use was made of stock characters: English domestics, French maids, Irish policemen, hard-working farmers, good-hearted bums, officious do-gooders, unscrupulous businessmen, unprincipled lawyers and nefarious foreign agents, to name but a few. Some of the major characters were also presented with one-dimensional force. Punjab and The Asp, for instance, were the very embodiments of retribution and revenge.

But Gray's world was hardly one-dimensional. Though judged by many to be an ultra-conservative defender of traditional values, in reality he was often bitingly critical of "establishment" figures. Though his images were often strongly contrasting black versus white, his view of what constituted moral integrity was often controversial. Many of his characters were quite complex.

Mention has already been made of the tensions which existed within the person of "Daddy" Warbucks; he was no isolated example. Good-hearted crooks such as Tom Take, the petty thief or Nick Gatt, the leader of a syndicate mob, were not uncommon. They were particularly significant in view of Gray's strong opposition to the judicial system's lenient treatment of criminals. In fact Gray was unable, at times, to sustain the contrast. Nick Gatt, for instance, was introduced as a ruthless gang lord who had arranged the death of Jasper Key. Yet later in the story he professed,

> *Nick Gatt, the killer, eh? But never have I, Nick Gatt, killed honest men. And I, Nick Gatt, still have a heart, I think.*

Critics have also generally failed to note the satirical aspect of Gray's work. Overstatement has always been a mark of the satirist. To be sure the critic has every right to challenge the viewpoint or message of the satirist, but he is on far less secure ground when he challenges the right to satirize or insists that the comic page is not the place for social satire. This may seem transparently obvious in the age of *Doonesbury* but three of the most significant newspaper comics satirists of pre-*Doonesbury* times—Harold Gray, Al Capp, and Walt Kelly—have all had their right to engage in satire challenged.

The calls for censorship have not come exclusively from the political right.

Gray drew his first major criticism when he satirized certain tendencies of Franklin Delano Roosevelt's highly popular New Deal. In March 1934 he began a sequence in which an innocent Warbucks was indicted for income-tax evasion. Facing business collapse, "Daddy" had conscientiously set aside his tax payment in a separate account and instructed his faithful secretary, Zebadiah Z. Hare, to make payment when the company closed. Unfortunately for Warbucks, Hare skipped to Mexico with the money. Ward Heely and Bill McBribe, two political hacks, then conspired wtih Phil O. Bluster and Judge Cogg to stack a jury and frame "Daddy." Some Roosevelt sympathizers were annoyed. Richard L. Neuberger, writing in *The New Republic* under the heading "Hooverism in the Funnies" claimed Gray was making a not-too-subtle defense of the utility company magnates then under investigation by the Roosevelt administration.

The following year Gray did a story in which a penniless "Daddy" teamed up with an eccentric but brilliant inventor Eli Eon to produce Eonite, a miracle substance. Whoever controlled Eonite controlled the world, and an unscrupulous financier, J. Gordon Slugg, sought to obtain the formula. When "Daddy" refused to sell, Slugg turned to a group of pompous demagogues: Claude Claptrap, a rabble-rousing orator; Horation Hack, a professional reformer and propagandist; Ronald Renegade, a "Park Avenue swell"; Phineas Plunder, Lester Lacque, and Byron Bunkum. They, along with several rough-haired labor agitators, stirred up popular hatred. Eventually a riot led to the destruction of the plant, the death of Eli Eon, and the loss of jobs for those who wanted to work.

Though the biting satire included an unscrupulous financier among the villains, James Clendenin, editor of the Huntington, West Virginia *Herald Dispatch*, wrote a front-page editorial denouncing Gray's criticism of the New Deal and organized labor. No longer would the comic strip run in his paper. *The New Republic* in an unsigned editorial entitled "Fascism in the Funnies" praised Clendenin's censorship and *The Nation* lent support. Gray was instructed by his syndicate to desist from making further political comment in his comic.

But Gray was much more than a controversial satirist. He was a gifted storyteller who constructed many of his stories with great care, although exceptions exist; characters or incidents were sometimes introduced without adequate preparation and plots were sometimes less than fully consistent.

In April 1954, for instance, The Asp and Punjab brought "Daddy" back to a lonely cabin in a motel unit because they feared that if he were in a hospital he would be more easily discovered by his enemies. Before the month was out two gangsters had to be "eliminated" because they had come too close to finding him. Eventually "Daddy" was blown up in a boat as he tried to escape. Then Punjab and The Asp left Annie completely on her own because government taxation prevented "Daddy" from leaving any money for her upkeep!

YESTERDAY AN OLD, DILAPIDATED, ONE LEGGED WANDERER ASKED ABIGAIL FOR FOOD---
WHAT IF HE WAS JUST A RAGGED OLD TRAMP? I FELT SORRY FOR HIM - AFTER THE MARVELOUS KINDNESS OF THOSE TRUCK DRIVERS TO US, I'D BE ASHAMED TO TURN ANY ONE FROM MY DOOR-
2-7-38
HE HAD A LOT TO SAY ABOUT HOW HE'D WORK FOR ANYTHING YOU GIVE HIM - BUT THAT WAS BEFORE HE'D EATEN -
HE SEEMED DIFFERENT FROM MOST TRAMPS-
SURE - MORE RAGGED AND LOTS DIRTIER- AND HE HAD A WOODEN LEG-

WHILE IN ANOTHER PART OF THE CITY---
T'S PHIL O BLUSTER-
THREE CHEERS FOR BLUSTER-
HE SURE GITS AFTER THEM RICH FELLERS-
HOORAY FOR BLUSTER-
GIVE US A SPEECH-
SPEECH-
AH, MY FRIENDS- YOU OVERWHELM ME- IN HELPING TO SEND TO PRISON THAT ARCH PIRATE, WARBUCKS I DID ONLY MY SACRED DUTY AS DEFENDER OF THE COMMON PEOPLE WHO RA SED ME TO THE EXALTED OFFICE I HOLD-
GREAT LINE, PHIL'S GOT-
Satire in Gray's world.

In some cases stories were begun but suddenly dropped. On August 1, 1954, an escaped "lifer" rescued Annie from a mugging. When the police arrived Annie mislead them to protect the convict. Instinctively she felt he couldn't "be a *very* bad guy." When she reached the next town she heard comments that Boss Bluster had framed him but that was the last mention of the convict or Boss Bluster. It appeared to be the beginning of another story in which the good-hearted criminal world would be vindicated. Was it dropped at the direction of the newspaper syndicate? Quite possibly, for in one instance Gray was clearly forced to discontinue a story before its conclusion; it took place during Franklin Roosevelt's try for fourth term in office.

Disturbed by Roosevelt's personal "dynasty" and government war regulations, Gray satirized the President and his wife Eleanor in the figures of the pompous Mayor George Gull and his pushy wife Gnomy. His criticism included an attack upon the abuses of gas rationing but not gas rationing itself, government regulation of prices and increase in government forms, hardly earth-shattering criticism even in wartime. Gray obviously felt that a war should not place a democratic government or leader above criticism. However, his thinly disguised portrayal of Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt reduced the President to the level of a political hack. It was probably the tone of the criticism more than any specific criticisms which lead to an abrupt end to the story, so abrupt in fact that there is a period of several weeks in which the Sunday pages, processed in advance of the daily pages to faciliate color printing, carried on the Gull story while the daily story suddenly changed direction. On Saturday, Aug. 28, 1943, Gull was campaigning for Mayor. On Monday the 30th the following conversation took place between two of Annie s Junior Commandoes:

BOY: *Do you think Mr. Spangle can beat Mayor Gull in the election?*
GIRL: *I'm not talkin'! And you'd better not talk, either!*
BOY: *Why? Is it a crime to discuss politics?*
GIRL: *Colonel Annie says it is, for any Junior Commando! It's orders!*
BOY: *Yuh'd think she'd be th' first to talk politics, with her uncle runnin' for mayor.*
GIRL: *Maybe she got her orders, too!*
BOY: *But she's our Colonel! Who could give her orders?*
GIRL: *I guess there's always a General somewhere to tell a Colonel to pipe down.*

The Sunday page continued the election story for another six weeks, making references to incidents in the daily pages which had not been printed. The episode and its evident accommodations make for an interesting instance of press censorship of political satire in wartime conditions.

Of far less serious concern than broken stories and press censorship were a number of name changes or misspellings, some perhaps due to poor proof-reading: Mike Dooley became Monk Dooley for no apparent reason; Mrs. Crawfish became Mrs. Crawfishe; Patrick Puddle became Peter Puddle; Dan Hazard became Don Hazard; Herr Saltz became Herr Salts; Yuma was called Blackie; and Dennis the cop became Clancy before reverting to Dennis.

On the whole, though, Gray was able to introduce quickly and effectively, the elements of potential conflict. He was exceptionally gifted at being able to establish suspense—often over weeks or indeed months. The early story of Annie and Captain Spike Marlin shipwrecked on a desert island is an excellent example. Annie had placed a note in a bottle and set it afloat; "Daddy" was aboard a large boat in search of his missing ward; and toward the end of the story Annie contracted a critically dangerous fever. Gray was able to interweave the strands, switching from one to the other, holding out the possibility of a rescue and then allowing a quirk of fate or human stupidity to intervene.

Gray was able also to build up moral tension. Frequently victims of injustice would experience the growing frustration of seeking redress of grievance as various avenues of help were exhausted because establishment figures were found to be on the payroll of the crooks.

The climax to a plot often came with sudden swiftness. In one memorable story Annie in flight for her life jumped a slow-moving freight. But the pursuing killer spotted her and also jumped aboard. Her death seemed inevitable when suddenly the killer was caught by a mail hook.

Little Orphan Annie, during its long run, was a continuous story with subtle episodic *segues*. Nevertheless, many of the individual episodes found skillful resolution before Annie took to the road for another change of scenery.

Capitalism and the Work Ethic

Ignatius G. Mattingly wrote an artice for *Harper's Magazine* in 1955 in which he claimed "Daddy" Warbucks was not only a symbol of Capitalism but "more particularly, Capitalism of the old-fashioned type practiced by the Jew of Malta, Commodore Vanderbilt, and Al Capp's General Bullmoose: what might be called Bird-dog Capitalism."

Few would dispute the comment that Harold Gray had a preference for Capitalism over Communism even though the

Silent, swift . . . no sound effects, no motion lines. And how could it be depicted more grimly?

SHE'S IN TH' NEXT CAR! WHEN THEY FIND HER, SHE JUST FELL OFF A FREIGHT! TH' PERFECT CRIME!
3-11-44
NOT A CHANCE TO TIE ME UP WITH THIS ONE"
HAROLD GRAY

size of "Daddy's" wealth reflected more the exaggeration of satire and fantasy than the suggestion that every enterprising businessman would become a multi-millionaire or the head of a multi-national corporation. Many of Gray s businessmen were small, honest, compassionate, hard-working entrepreneurs: Jack Boot, Caleb Shop, Mr. Forge, etc.

The crucial question, however, is whether Gray advocated a *laissez faire* style Capitalism totally divorced from moral or government regulation. A careful examination of Gray's work reveals a far more ambiguous attitude than is suggested by Mattingly's sweeping generalization.

At times "Daddy" could avow a severe approach to business seemingly little different from that pursued by unscrupulous businessmen such as Count De Tour, Foxpaw Phineas P. Pinchpenny and J. Gordon Slugg:

> *The more one has, the harder one has to fight to keep it. In big business it's dog eat dog. No business can stand still. It has to grow or be swallowed up and it's better to swallow the other fellow first. But it's a game I like and I'll be all right, as long as I don't turn my back.*

On other occasions, however, he clearly recognized certain moral limits, one of the more important being an element of sentiment or compassion. When Tom Bullion refused to give him aid on the ground that "sentiment should have no place in business," he replied:

> *Of course that's business. But I never played it that way. Maybe that's why I'm mighty near a failure now. Still, I'd rather be honest and shoot square with my friends than to be a Judas for all the money in the world.*

Another moral consideration was the sense of responsibility felt toward those employed by the businessman. Warbucks's temptation to get out of the struggle in order to find personal relaxation was tempered by the awareness that employees might thereby lose jobs . . .

YOU SEE, TOM, I'VE COME TO YOU AS A LAST RESORT - IF YOU DON'T HELP ME I'M RUINED - BUT I KNOW YOU ARE MY FRIEND -
AH YES - I SEE - HM-M-M-M - QUITE SO - QUITE SO -
MY COLLEAGUES AND I COULD ACQUIRE YOUR BUSINESS FOR NEARLY NOTHING, MERELY BY FAILING TO LOAN YOU MONEY AT THIS TIME - OF COURSE THERE IS THE MATTER OF OUR FRIENDSHIP - BUT, AS YOU KNOW, SENTIMENT SHOULD HAVE NO PLACE IN BUSINESS - REALLY I AM AFRAID WE HAVE NO MONEY TO LOAN AT THIS TIME -

Warbucks, the cutthroat capitalist? He was frequently the victim of those who rejected the idealism he championed.

> *All my life I've dreamed of the time when I'd have enough to retire. But now I can't retire. My friends depend on me. It wouldn't be fair for me to leave the ship just now*

. . . or not find jobs in the first place:

> *As I see it, a few men have to work hard and take chances and battle heavy odds and worry nights, so that millions may have that "fuller" life you mention, instead of every day off* without pay.

Yet there was the frank admission that part of the motivation to remain in business was the personal enjoyment to be found in the matching of wits in the game, sometimes the *war* of business competition.

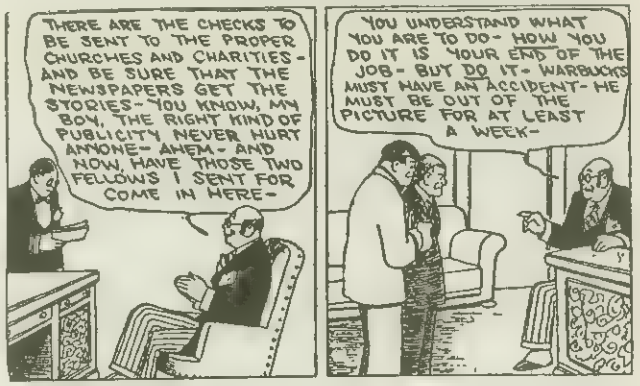
In principle, at least, Gray was not promoting a Capitalism totally divorced from moral restraint or social obligation. Nor was he unaware of the corruption to be found within the business community. He portrayed all too clearly that many businessmen behaved without moral responsibility and chief among them were those who posed as community leaders. There were few people more odious to Gray than the unscrupulous businessmen who postured for public recognition and gave business a bad name. Of Old Foxpaw "Daddy" complained:

> *(He) gives liberally to churches and hospitals. The public is sold on the idea that he's a sweet, kind hearted old soul, a saint. But that's only a screen for him to work behind. He's one of the trickiest and most unscrupulous old bandits at large.*

When Annie informed Daddy' in 1932—two years before Gray's notorious defense of business leaders—that several businessmen and leaders of society were organizing to run the crooks out of business, "Daddy" observed:

> *A good idea as far as it goes. But how about the so-called respectable people? Are they so very good when they allow their poor neighbors to suffer.*

However, when it came to government regulation of business there seems little doubt that "Daddy" stood firmly in the Jeffersonian tradition that the least intervention by the government


THERE ARE THE CHECKS TO BE SENT TO THE PROPER CHURCHES AND CHARITIES - AND BE SURE THAT THE NEWSPAPERS GET THE STORIES - YOU KNOW, MY BOY, THE RIGHT KIND OF PUBLICITY NEVER HURT ANYONE - AHEM - AND NOW, HAVE THOSE TWO FELLOWS I SENT FOR COME IN HERE -
YOU UNDERSTAND WHAT YOU ARE TO DO - HOW YOU DO IT IS YOUR END OF THE JOB - BUT DO IT - WARBUCKS MUST HAVE AN ACCIDENT - HE MUST BE OUT OF THE PICTURE FOR AT LEAST A WEEK -

. And he never displayed the hypocrisy practiced by his enemies, a fact that infuriated Gray's critics.

the better. According to Thomas Jefferson, "A wise and frugal government, which shall restrain men from injuring one another, which shall leave them otherwise free to regulate their own pursuits of industry and improvement and shall not take from the mouth of labor the bread it has earned, this is the sum of good government." This belief, rather than any particular desire to whitewash the world of business, was Gray s motivation for criticizing the growing bureaucracy associated with Roosevelt's New Deal; one cannot fairly, I contend, accuse him of being utterly insensitive to social obligations.

Had Gray really been rooted in the thought of Calvin, as Becker suggested, rather than in the tradition of Jefferson, his attitude toward governmental regulation of business might have been much different; Calvin and most of his contemporaries, Roman Catholic and Protestant alike, believed temporal rulers clearly had the responsibility of regulating the moral conduct of business.

In fairness to Gray, government bureaucracy is not above its own inefficiency and corruption. And it must surely be one of the ironies of American journalism that for offering criticism of the government, Gray was called a fascist by journalists who demanded the removal of his views from the free press!

Robert H. Abel's remark that Gray advocated the abolition of unions also needs careful scrutiny. In actual fact, Gray seldom mentioned unions. If that meant he called for their abolition, he was uncharacteristically discreet! One of the earliest references came in the small town of Blunderville and it was simply the observation:

> *Folks don't need unions here. They work when they feel like it and lay off when they feel like it. An' they charge what they figger is fair an' do just about as they please.*

This may express a naive preference for a much simpler lifestyle but it hardly constitutes a flaming crusade *against* unions.

A more significant reference came in October 1932 when the newsboy Lug went on a personal strike for more money only to have Annie take his job. The young redhead responded to the charge of being a scab in these words:

If he was worth more'n a dollar a week, it'd be different. But he wasn't earnin' even a dollar. Th' way I look at it, he's quit and there's no reason I shouldn't get th' job.

A far more extensive criticism came in the Eonite story in 1935. It depicted long-haired agitators trying to foment a strike among the Eonite workers. It was largely on the basis of this story that Gray gained his reputation of being anti-labor.

A specific criticism of enforced union membership (the 'closed shop") came in 1955 when Tom Try, Sr., was trying to persuade his son to quit a street gang and stand on his own

BUT, ABOVE ALL, WE MUST KEEP THEM ORGANIZED-
YES, OF COURSE- OTHERWISE WE CANNOT COLLECT OUR DUES-
AH, MY FRIENDS, AND DO NOT FORGET THE INITIATION FEES AND THE FINES AND THE THE ASSESSMENTS-
WE SHOULD CALL A STRIKE AT ONCE- BUT WHAT SHOULD WE DEMAND?
WE COULD DEMAND A FOUR HOUR DAY-
YES, AND DEMAND DOUBLE WAGES- THAT SHOULD BE POPULAR AND WOULD GAIN US WIDE ATTENTION- AND NEW FOLLOWERS TO PAY DUES-
7-18-35
BAH- YOU DO NOT KNOW THOSE WORKERS IN THERE- THE FOOLS WANT TO WORK- IMAGINE THAT-
THEY ARE TOO SATISFIED- WARBUCKS HAS SOFTENED THEM WITH FINE HOUSES, HIGH WAGES, FREE ENTERTAINMENT-
IF WE DO NOT ACT QUICKLY WE ARE RUINED- WE ARE LEADERS WITH NO ONE TO LEAD-
WE CANNOT EVEN BOMB THE PLANT- THERE ARE TOO MANY GUARDS-- VERY MEAN GUARDS-
THERE SHOULD BE A LAW AGAINST GUARDS-
EMPLOYEES ONLY
HAROLD GRAY

Such scenes were not merely Gray's rebuke to those he satirized . . . but also admonitions to his own followers to tread higher paths.

feet. In reply Tom Jr. recalled that his father had once vowed he'd "pay nobody or no organization for th' right to work at a good job!" but had caved in to pressure.

Without doubt, Gray offered criticism of certain aspects or organized labor, just as he criticized certain aspects of government and business, but I have found no evidence to support the charge that he challenged the right of unions to exist. On the contrary, in the earlier years of the strip he described "Daddy" encouraging Byron Silo to organize a farmers' association: "(until) farmers form a sound union disciplined fairly and ably led, they'll go on taking it on the chin from smaller unorganized groups." And on one occasion he defended strike action, even strike violence. In 1928 Annie found herself in Mayfair working as a waitress at Pete's Restaurant. After a grueling week's work she was infuriated to find Pete had no intention of paying her. In fact, when she asked for her money she was fired. Her response was to strike and to display her picket in front of the restaurant: "ON STRIKE for more money and better working conditions." When Pete tried to get the local police chief to remove her, she came back waving a brick:

Yeah? Wanta get rough, eh? I've been quiet. See? No cracked heads. Just a nice, peaceful strike. But if yuh wanta start somethin'. . .

This support of the mistreated worker was not inconsistent with Gray's general attitude. The hard-nosed Annie was challenging yet another manifestation of abused authority. Gray's later criticism of unions stemmed more from his aversion to corrupted power and what he considered unnecessary regulations than an anti-worker bias. He had an aversion to *both* the "sore-headed worker" and the "tight-fisted boss."

Underlying Gray's attitude to business and labor, of course, was his attitude toward work. And one of his more controversial views was the belief that work earned the right to live. In Annie's words, "*No*body, who's able to work, has any *right* to *any*thing, 'less they *earn* it! Not even to life, th' way I figger it." Her contention was supported in later years with a quotation from the New Testament, "If anyone will not work, neither let him eat."

Yet when it came to the application of this principle there was considerable modification. Deadbeats could be condemned, particularly those who deliberately lived off others and ridiculed those who didn't. A conversation from 1934 illustrated it well:

DEADBEAT: *You sure are a sucker. HUH! Nobody's goin' to make me work when I can live better and a heap easier without don' a lick.*

"DADDY": *Sure. But I prefer to work. See? That's where you and I differ.*

DEADBEAT: *Well, I ain't worked for years and I ain't paid but mighty little rent. But I eat reg'lar and I live swell. Let the suckers take care o' me. What do you think of that?*

"DADDY : *What do I think? I think you're a bum, a chiseler and a cheat . . . Get out before I throw you out.*

When it came to those who were congenitally lazy or incompetent the attitude was somewhat more compassionate. As Kate Keen explained to Annie, "Many (people) are just naturally lazy; many don't have the capacity to learn, even when given every chance!" And several bums, congenial drop-outs, and inoffensive lazy folk were portrayed with great warmth if not full approval through the years.

In a more positive vein Gray tried to present the constructive benefits of work as a means to personal well-being, therapy, and fulfillment. Work was an essential part of the truly happy, satisfying life. Annie could enjoy the work-free atmosphere of Warbucks's mansion . . . for so long. But she quickly found work for idle hands:

A person can get along and eat regular 'bout so long without workin'. Then blooie!! Anyway I don't feel good just loafin' around. I gotta be doin' something.

Annie and "Daddy" both possessed this strong inner compulsion to work. In a current idiom they were both workaholics. Annie would often pass up the normal relaxations of childhood for a part-time job. As she remarked:

I've noticed that kids who just do nothin' but play never seem to 'mount to much. Work tires 'em out. Pretty soon even playin' tires 'em. Nope. Not for me.

And "Daddy" would frequently work days on end without a break.

This compulsive drive, however, didn't blind them to other consideration. Annie was honest enough to admit she didn't enjoy the monotony or drudgery of work. She was quite prepared to use her head to save her back:

Washin' takes a strong back an' plenty o' weight if yer goin' to last. When yuh don't weigh much yuh have to use yer nut if yuh s'pect to get very far.

And "Daddy" could question the necessity of Byron and Mary Silo working from dawn to dusk without any time for relaxation or enjoyment. What he might choose for himself he didn't demand of others:

I like rest and relaxation as well as any one. I insist on it for anyone who works for me. But for myself? No. I work till I get done. So far, I've never seemed to get done.

But even this was overstatement, for "Daddy" took time off for holidays and social events.

A compulsive work ethic was also qualified through the experiences of the Depression. In early 1931 "Daddy" suffered bankruptcy and in company with Annie took up the life of a wandering hobo. The two eventually found accommdation in a rooming house operated by the crusty but kind-hearted Maw Green. "Daddy" tried to find work and expressed the frustration of many others who were unable to find employment:

I always said any man who had his health and his two hands could get work if he wanted to work. Huh! What a sap I was. I have no union card and no trade. I can't even be a janitor or a street-cleaner.

In short, Gray's ideology and philosophies were far more complex than most of his critics have realized. And some of his most severe judgments were qualified and mellowed in the crucible of human experience.

MOVE ALONG, YOU- WE KNOW HOW TO TREAT TOUGH KILLERS-
YOU SAID IT- WE DON'T PAMPER HIS KIND HERE-
WELL, HERE'S YOUR PRISONER- RECKON YOU'LL BE ABLE TO KEEP HIM THIS TIME?
STOP!
WHAT IS THIS? A TRICK?
I HOLD THE PROPER CREDENTIALS FROM YOUR GOVERNOR- REMOVE THOSE HAND CUFFS AND RELEASE THAT PRISONER AT ONCE-
WHO ARE YOU?
YES SIR, GOVERNOR-

The Search For Justice

As Harold Gray satirized many segments of American life he experienced, as most satirists did, the reaction of those who were concerned about the effect his criticisms upon the general public. Thus *Time* magazine could report that a 1965 *LOA* sequence on mental hospitals had been cancelled by John R. Reitemeyer, Publisher of the Hartford, Conn. *Courant* on the grounds that nothing like that could happen in Connecticut. *The Dallas Times Herald* was more magnanimous; "In the belief that even misguided Orphan Annies are entitled to a viewpoint without censorship, this newspaper will reluctantly continue the objectionable episode."

One area of major interest to Gray was the failure of the judicial system to guarantee justice. He examined the conduct of policemen, lawyers, judges, and politicians, those entrusted with the maintenance of justice.

A typical Gray plot would involve an honest, hard-working, small businessman who was being forced to pay protection money. When the man appealed to the police he found that while the local officer was usually sympathetic, some senior official was involved in the racket. The variation of plot depended upon whether it was the Chief of Police, the District Attorney, the Mayor, or any combination of the three who were involved in the conspiracy. A slight but highly significant variation was the clever but unscrupulous criminal lawyer who might manage to gain the release of the criminal *through* the legal process.

In such situations how was justice secured?

One approach was the election or appointment of more honest officials. Gray presented instances in which reform candidates ran and even won. But this is a lengthy process and one fraught with difficulty. It often provides the pleasure of turning one set of scamps out of office only to vote others in.

A second and more immediate approach was an appeal to a higher authority, such as a Governor. Gray portrayed this option as well. In 1936 Fred Free secured evidence which would clear the name of Marigold's shoemaker Jack Boot and convict the town's leading citizen, Huntington H. Halk. But Halk had so much influence in town, Free had to present his evidence directly to the Governor of the state. And in 1945 when Annie had been tried and found guilty of the murder of Mrs. J. Bleating-Hart by a jury presided over by an unprincipled, publicity-seeking Judge Fudge. "Daddy" came to her rescue with the Governor and Attorney General of the state.

A third approach was the intervention of a group of citizens, a vigilante group or, to use a slightly more acceptable image, a Robin Hood band. One of the more controversial elements in *Little Orphan Annie* was the endorsement of this solution, as illustrated by a story from 1927. The oppressive villain in this case was Mr. Mack, manager of one of the town's banks but secretly leader of a group of bank robbers. The townspeople had been taken in by Mr. Mack's generous gift of a pipe organ to the local church but Annie was not so gullible. She knew Mack had foreclosed on old widow Drake's farm and forced her into the poor-house. When the citizens of Blue Bell formed a Vigilance Committee and Annie asked Mrs. Flint what it was, she received this reply:

> *Vigilance committee is just a group of men who take matters into their own hands and uphold the law. I'm glad to hear they're awake at last and are doing something, with all these bank bandits around.*

When Annie began to probe too closely into the affairs of the banker, Mack sent his son Pig-eye to burn down the residence of Angus and Nellie Flint with whom Annie lived. Fortunately, Annie and Sandy caught Pig-eye in the act and prevented the fire. To defend Pig-eye, Mack hired Mr. Berg, a big city lawyer reputed to "get anybody outa jail an' keep 'em out, even murderers." But country justice prevailed. The jury declared Pig-eye guilty and Judge Crider sentenced him to the reformatory.

Annie was later kidnapped by Mack's gang and rescued by "Daddy" in a shoot-out just before she was to be killed. Fein, "the biggest crook and the sharpest criminal lawyer in the country," arrived to defend Mack and his gang. At this point "Daddy" decided the judicial system might be abused. There was a strong possibility Fein might succeed in securing the acquittal of the gang. So "Daddy" called upon an inspector and some of his boys to make sure all intimidating criminals left town:

> *We've got to see that this gang gets what's coming to 'em. They're using everything to get Mack off. He's a killer but he'll go free if we leave it to the courts. Fight fire with fire. I'll give him justice if I have to be a worse thug than he is to do it. See?*

Ominous, to say the least!

When, in the following year "Daddy" learned that the gang that had kidnapped and possibly murdered Annie was to be released, he vowed:

> *So City Hall has ordered the release of Big Tom and his gang. Justice breaks down . . . I'm not a Reformer. When law breaks down I'll use their own tools. I'll give 'em justice for once. If they leave jail they'll be shot on sight.*

Gray was not insensitive to the dangers of working beyond the confines of the law; when a Blunderville mob in 1929 threatened to break into the town jail and hang young John Blunder, Judge Tort admonished:

> *Gentlemen, it is shocking that you decent men of this town have so far forgotten yourselves as to stoop to even consider mob violence. Let the law take its course.*

Yet "Daddy" remained ambivalent on the subject. In theory he upheld the law; in fact he was prepared to move beyond the law when the law failed to secure justice.

A possible resolution was suggested with the drawing of a distinction between civilized law and jungle law. In 1935 "Daddy" explained to Punjab:

> *In the jungle I'd fix his clock in short order. But this is civilization, Punjab. We have laws, and* I obey them.

But by 1937 it was evident that jungle law applied not solely to some distant geographic jungle but to a moral jungle which

BIG TOM PRATICALLY CONTROLS CITY HALL - THE BIG BOYS OVER THERE DO WHAT HE TELLS 'EM - ARREST ANY OF HIS GANG AND THEY'RE ON THE STREET AGAIN IN FIVE MINUTES - HE'S IMMUNE - WHAT CAN WE DO?
SO THAT'S IT - THINK THEY'RE BIGGER THAN LAW AND ORDER, DO THEY? AND OUR SO-CALLED NICE PEOPLE ARE TOO LILY WHITE TO GO AFTER 'EM WITH THEIR OWN TOOLS -
BOSS THIS TOWN WITH GUNS - BOMBS - VIOLENCE - IF THAT'S THEIR DISH I'LL GIVE 'EM A STOMACH FULL -
WE'LL HAVE THE WRECKING CREW READY AT MIDNIGHT - WE'VE GOT LOTS TO DO SO STEP ON IT -
HAROLD GRAY

could exist within the United States. "Daddy" pronounced private sentence upon one gang:

> *You kidnapped little Annie and planned to murder her. You went boldy into that jungle beyond the law. Well, the jungle too has a law, for your kind. And no* habeas corpus.

The ambiguity remained. How could "Daddy" simultaneously practice both civilized and jungle law? How could he consistently order Punjab and The Asp to leave the administration of justice to the proper authorities while he dispensed his own private justice? "Daddy" seemed hesitant to answer. Witness the conversation he and Punjab had regarding the lynching of Jerry Gaws:

> PUNJAB: *But, Sahib, does he not deserve execution?*
> "DADDY": *Of course. But not this way, Punjab. This is* illegal.
> PUNJAB: *Ah, yes. The forms of your country must be obeyed. In turning the mob's wrath on him, I meant only justice to be done.*
> "DADDY": *I know, Punjab! We think alike. But this lynching must be stopped. Follow me.*
> PUNJAB: *Sorry, Sahib, but I fear we do* not *think* exactly *alike, sometimes.* (taking out his sword) *He is a very bad person. Would it not be a great saving of time and trouble?*
> "DADDY": *No! We have* laws *here for his kind, Punjab.*
> PUNJAB: *But laws take so long. I could, perhaps, make him disappear?*
> "DADDY": *Not that, either. No. He goes to jail.*
> PUNJAB: *This fine country. I admire its law and justice greatly. But sometimes . . .*
> "DADDY": *I know what you mean, Punjab. But . . . ahem . . . I don't want to discuss the matter now.*

Changes in the criminal justice system that tilted toward protection of the accused brought a new skepticism about the authority of criminal law, at least in any absolute sense. In the words of the disgruntled lawman, Major "El" Apt:

> *Oh, I suppose a unlettered hillbilly like me cain't be expected to git a'holt o' th' finer points o' this new sweetness and light gruel they're preachin'! But ah was brung up t'believe th'* law *was to protect th' law-abidin' and honest folks! When any feller went* outside *the' law, he chanced gettin' kilt! Course, if he got caught alive he had a right to a fair trial! But what bites me is how come all t'oncet dirty murderers git* all *th' protection and th' victims don't even git their names spelt right in their death notices?*

Gray was raising an old question. What should one do when the existing law prevents or impedes justice? If his answer is often less than fully acceptable to those who believe in the rule of law, one cannot deny that he addressed himself to a serious issue. And it shouldn't be thought that Gray's response is limited to the political right; it is shared by many revolutionaries deeply persuaded that despotic regimes must be overthrown by violence in the interests of true justice.

In this respect Stephen Becker's evaluation of Gray may be far too simplistic:

> *Gray's implication (is) that when all else fails, it is permissible to fall back on the free exercise of power by the virtuous—or by their leaders: e.g., "Daddy" Warbucks. In its simplest form this is severe Calvinism: the decisions and actions of the elect are unimpeachable. "Daddy" Warbucks has, in short, license, much as Mickey Spillane's hero has. The law turns out to be for the protection of the good and not for the protection of all men.*

"Daddy" may have assumed that his own integrity gave him the right at times to ignore the law in pursuit of justice, but such conviction cannot be simplistically attributed to Calvinism.

Calvin quite clearly opposed the exercise of power on the part of any individual or group apart from duly established civil authority, even if corruption and injustice prevailed; the private citizen was not to take the law into his own hands. Redress of grievance was to be sought through duly authorized civil authorities. Calvin would be diametrically opposed to the lawless escapades of a Mickey-Spillane hero, a Punjab, or a "Daddy" Warbucks.

Among American Calvinists, the Scots-Irish, with memories of Collodin in their blood, would come the closest to Gray's position. In America they participated enthusiastically in rebellion against Britain. But the more reflective among them did not consider the Revolution to be the work of a mob which had taken the law into its own hands. It was rather the work of Colonial legislatures that had *lawfully* declared independence. The more conservative Calvinists who refused to support the Rebellion also opposed *lawless* behavior; in fact, they refused to join in the Revolution because they believed the existing authority was the British Crown, not the Colonial legislature.

A more likely source of Gray's predeliction to operate outside civil law was the Social Contract theory of Rousseau, also deeply influential in American political thought. It taught that power rested ultimately with the people rather than their rulers. The people entered into contract with rulers but when the rulers broke the terms of the contract, power reverted to the people. This was a much more fertile ground for Gray's portrayal of groups of people taking the law into their own hands when the contract had been broken by corrupt officials.

Gray's heavy emphasis upon crime and punishment might lead one to expect a completely unsympathetic or even vindictive portrayal of criminals. But though some were presented with full disapproval, many others received very compassionate treatment. There were, of course, some who had been unfairly charged or unjustly condemned. But the list of "good" bad-guys included some whose behavior was quite vicious.

Though Gray clearly emphasized the exercise of individual will power in the rehabilitation process, he was not wholly oblivious to the debilitating influence of bad environment. On several occasions he commented on the extent to which criminals had been shaped by a poor childhood environment. And he suggested in one story that the criminality of Peter La Plata had been caused by a childhood blow to the head. Once the brain pressure was removed, La Plata became a totally different person. It would be wrong, however, to think of Gray as a convinced behaviorist!

In actual fact, there seems to be no simple consistency in Gray's writing on this or many other topics. He was less a rigid, dogmatic thinker than a portrayer of human life in all its bewildering diversity. And a master storyteller of comic-strip adventures.

True Religion

When Harold Gray began his newspaper work there were several subjects generally considered too controversial for serious

discussion on the newspaper comic page. One was religion. As Annie herself remarked:

I guess it's not so healthy talkin' church much. Th' finest way to get yerself a mess o' trouble is to fool with most any guy's religion.

Yet Gray broke with this tradition very early in his career. He openly criticized religious prudery, hypocrisy, and intolerance. He even questioned generally accepted elements of Biblical morality and struggled with the concept of the Christ figure.

The prudish churchman appeared as early as June 14, 1925 when Deacon Pinocle complained that it was disgraceful of Annie to swim on Sunday. In 1927 she was criticized for doing a washing on Sunday, "You ought to have been at Sunday school or at church too." Her response?

Been to church, eh? My friends go to church, too. Finest thing in th' world. But they don't go 'round braggin' 'bout it. Bet yuh can't even tell me what th' SERMON *was 'bout, can yuh.*

In 1929 when Mr. Bulbus told Annie it was wicked to play golf on Sunday, she reflected, "It's wicked to play th' kind of golf Mr. Bulbus plays on any day."

The portrayal of hypocrisy, a favorite theme for Gray, was often associated with religious affiliation. Unscrupulous businessmen (or women) such as Blue Bell's George J. Mack, Cosmic City's Phineas P. Pinchpenny, or Static's Sadie Smith were known for their financial contributions to the church. However, as Annie commented:

If Mack had helped that widow keep her farm it'd have done lots more real good'n giving a pipe-organ to th' church, I betcha. But it wouldn't have made half th' splash.

Women obsessed with social status, such as Mrs. Sandstone or Mrs. Filch, attended church to show off their finery. In the words of the former:

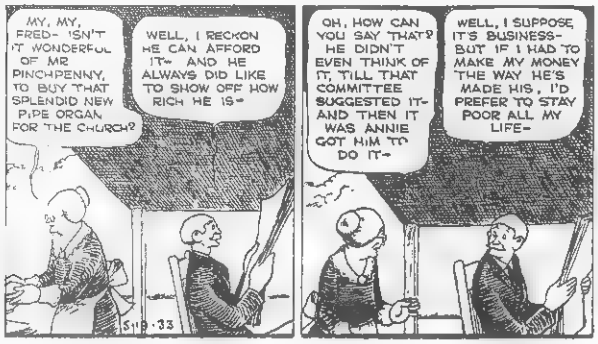
Well, it certainly affords me a lot of satisfaction when I think how a lot of the neighbors stared when I wore my new outfit to church yesterday. I was the best-dressed woman there.

It mattered little to her that the clothes had been bought with misappropriated funds.

Pretentious, even morally vicious do-gooders or social uplifters such as the horrendous Mrs. J. Bleating-Hart or Prissy Guffy, attended church regularly. When the latter verbally abused blind Marlene Drive, Annie exploded with all the fury of an Old Testament Prophet:

You make the air unclean!. . . You're so cruel an' heartless an' mean you're obscene to th' sight o' decent people!

Religious intolerance was discussed bluntly though somewhat superficially. In 1927, during the course of Annie's stay with Angus and Nellie Flint in Blue Bell, Gray ran a short episode about the opposition the newly arrived minister, Mr. Tupp, received from some of the local church leaders, Angus Flint included. Annie supported the young preacher.


MY, MY, FRED- ISN'T IT WONDERFUL OF MR PINCHPENNY, TO BUY THAT SPLENDID NEW PIPE ORGAN FOR THE CHURCH?
WELL, I RECKON HE CAN AFFORD IT- AND HE ALWAYS DID LIKE TO SHOW OFF HOW RICH HE IS-
OH, HOW CAN YOU SAY THAT? HE DIDN'T EVEN THINK OF IT, TILL THAT COMMITTEE SUGGESTED IT- AND THEN IT WAS ANNIE GOT HIM TO DO IT-
WELL, I SUPPOSE IT'S BUSINESS- BUT IF I HAD TO MAKE MY MONEY THE WAY HE'S MADE HIS, I'D PREFER TO STAY POOR ALL MY LIFE-
SEP. 33

He says yuh don't have to b'long to any certain church to get to heaven. He claims one religion is 'bout as good as another just as long as yuh live up to the one yuh b'lieve in. He says this thing of a lot o' different kinds o' churches scrappin' over which is best is th' bunk. . . . If there were more preachers like that bird there'd be lots more folks goin' to church, reg'lar, I betcha. . . . Th' young folks sure are crazy 'bout him now. Old Col. Crim stayed awake the whole service for the first time in thirty years.

Angus Flint, however, had other ideas:

I tell ye, the Minister-r-r is too young. . . radicalism. The old-fashioned religion has always been good enough. . . . 'Tis not entertainment we want from him or new-fangled notions but the old fashioned gospel. . . . I grant ye he is orthodox and a good lad. But ye never know what he will say. We want no change in Blue Bell.

Yet when it came to the show-down Angus Flint backed the young preacher and persuaded the other deacons to let him stay.

The issue which Gray could have discussed more fully is the practical limit to which tolerance can be extended. To what extent can any society tolerate individuals or groups committed to the manipulation or abuse of other people? Gray clearly did *not* believe tolerance meant a wholly uncritical acceptance of any and all religious practice, for he was severely critical of prudery, hypocrisy, and intolerance. Moreover, in the comment of Ginger the flower girl he could explicitly question the limit of tolerance:

Mr. Roundabout has about as much backbone as a dish-rag. . . . I've noticed that folks who are too tolerant of other people's ideas seldom have any ideas of their own.

His somewhat simplistic belief that "one religion is just about as good as another just so long as you live up to the one you believe in" *assumed* that all religions taught a common basic morality, to say nothing of a common belief in forgiveness or redemption. Not all do.

Though Gray could criticize religious inconsistency, he generally portrayed Sunday school and church attendance in a favorable light, especially during World War II. One of the earliest references to Sunday school came in 1927 when Annie reflected:

Sure does a kid good to go to Sunday school. Yuh learn a lot. I'm going to be a better kid 'n I ever used to be. No more scrappin' all th' time. It's wrong. If yuh get a sock on th' jaw yuh should turn the other cheek.

But there was a qualification. On the way home she beat up a boy who abused Sandy. Gray was not prepared to condone a meek capitulation to the bully.

Regular attendance began during Annie's stay with Bert and Bess Slagg in 1940 and continued when she was under the care of Mrs. Priscilla "Prissie" Sleet.

WE'VE BEEN WORKING HERE SUNDAYS AN AWFUL LOT LATELY!
WELL, FOLKS EXPECT US TO BE READY FOR THE MONDAY MORNING RUSH!
LET 'EM, I EXPECT! WE'RE GOIN' TO CHURCH, FROM NOW ON!
I'VE BEEN MISSING A LOT OF SUNDAYS, TOO! GUESS THE PADRE HAS MORE TO OFFER THAN THE GOLF CLUB! I'LL GO WITH YOU!
WHOLE PASSEL OF US FIGGER CHURCH WON'T HURT US NONE, EITHER!
HAROLD GRAY

The war of ideas: Gray depicts the battle's shifts.

Gray portrayed the church as an integral part of small town life. Of Mayfair Annie remarked:

Yessir, Sandy, a little town is th' place to live. There's th' church, not hid in among a bunch of warehouses but right out in th' center o' things. An' everybody goes on Sunday an' 'tween times they have chicken dinners an' things in the basement. Church means somethin' out there.

The same was true of Smoky Hollow. In the words of Grampaw Hank Holly:

Everybody around Smoky Hollow goes to Church. We all were raised that way. (The Minister's) a fine man. Not much of a fancy spellbinder, but lives his religion. With folks around here, that counts.

Or Springhalt:

ANNIE: *Gee, it makes yuh feel good to go to Church. Guess I'd sort o' forgotten.*

PIETY TILBURY: *Yes, Annie. I know how it is. In a big city lots of people sort of get out of the habit.*

TIDDELY TILBURY: *But here, in a small place like Springhalt, most everybody goes to Church, just naturally.*

PIETY TILBURY: *Our Minister isn't a spellbinder, thank goodness. He's just sincere and kindly and understandable.*

Or South Ruckus:

"E1" APT: *Church always does make me sort o' peaceful an' comfortable inside!*

ANNIE: *I'm 'shamed to admit I've missed Sunday school and church an awful lot too much. Far longer than I like t'think about!*

BILLIE JO APT: *Don't blame yourself, Annie! The way you've had to move around, church has had to be a sometime thing for you!*

"E1" APT: *Ah guess church is a "sometime thing" for lots o' folks who jest don't pay it much mind no more! But heah 'bouts, Annie, ouah church is real to us! We worship honest and we honah and listen to ouah minister! Ouah church-goin' ain't jest a "form," or "fer th' record"! We know th' Bible, an' we believes!*

The increase in church attendance during World War II received comment in an interesting dialogue between Annie and the Padre:

ANNIE: *I've been noticin'. Every Sunday more an more folks turn out for church. Course there's th' tire shortage an' th' gasoline rationing, too. Folks can't go ridin' or out to th' golf club, th' way they used to. Not even golf balls to waste any more. But folks still could sleep late, or putter around in their gardens. They don't have to come to church.*

PADRE: *No, Annie. No one has to come to church.*

ANNIE: *But they seem to want to come to church. Folks who haven't been for years an' years. Why?*

PADRE: *If it's a good thing, why look for motives, Annie?*

ANNIE: *Oh, I dunno. I was just wonderin' if th' war had anything to do with it, if it's sort o' made folks think more.*

PADRE: *You, my child, are observant beyond your years. I do not pretend to know the reasons behind great human movements, Annie. But I have heard it said, "There are no atheists in fox holes."*

Quite clearly the reasons for church attendance were varied and complex, indeed mysterious. Without denying the element of conventionality, Gray accurately acknowledged that many people attended for reasons much more deeply rooted than a desire to find social acceptance.

Though the church was portrayed without any denominational identity, its lay leadership in particular closely resembled the Methodist Church of Gray's own upbringing. Liturgical attire varied. The Padre was dressed in a black suit with clerical collar, Rev. Win Wright in a tie and gown, and Rev. Martin Meek in coat and tails without gown.

Mood and Expressionism . . . and a flavor of Edward Hopper's severity and silence.

Where "'most everybody goes to church," the "worshipers" obviously reflected a wide variety of lifestyles, good and bad. Annie could chafe about a group of malicious old church hens, "Y'd think church would do their kind some good, but I guess nothin' can change mean folks much!" But not all were of that stripe. Many were kind and compassionate: Byron and Mary Silo, Bess Slagg, Spike and Sally Spangles, Mrs. Winks and daughter Jane, Granpaw Hank and Honey Holly, Tiddely and Piety Tilbury, Marlene Drive, "E1" and Billie Ho Apt, and Filmore and Flossie Fiddle. There could be the prudish Deacon Pinocles. Yet Deacon Egg-Plant, despite the name, took time to visit the residents of Miss Asthma's "Home" and Deacon Doodle, a frequent visitor in Ma Licious's "Home" for children was instrumental in bringing about a much-needed investigation.

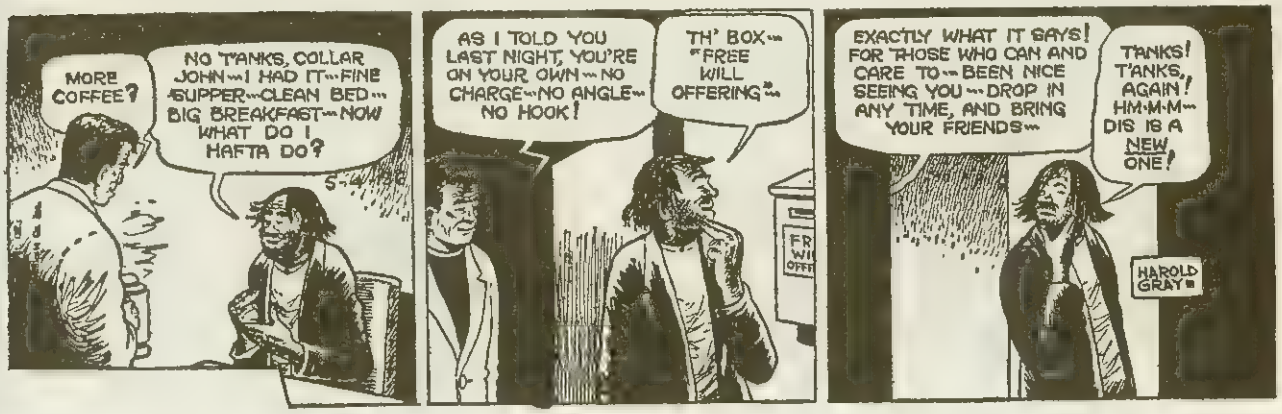
Considering Gray's portrayal of ordained ministers, one can find the clueless Rev. Martin Meek who cultivated his garden to death, or the gullible prison chaplain who bragged about the conversions he thought he had made. Yet five clerical figures—Mr. Tupp, The Padre, Collar John, Rev. Win Wright, and the unnamed "Reverend" who appeared on September 17, 1967—were portrayed with positive appreciation.

The Padre was introduced on January 27, 1942 after the strip had brooded for several months about the possibility of war. He appeared in a series of episodes involving Dr. Al Zee, recently returned from medical service in the Spanish Civil War (on which side was never revealed) and Dr. Eldeen, the operator of a nefarious private "hospital." Possessing sensitivity to need, selfless dedication to service, maturity of understanding and breadth of compassion, the Padre could nevertheless feel an "unholy rage" at inhumane treatment of human beings. Fading from the scene after the Eldeen story, he was brought back on June 20th to answer an important question from a group of women, "Padre! How can you, a man of peace, justify war?" Though he had earlier sought to do his work "without violence," the Padre rejected pacificism with a reference to Joel 3:10:

> *"Beat your plowshares into swords, and your pruning-hooks into spears: Let the weak say, I am strong." How, rather, can one justify surrender to bestial barbarism?*

NO--YOU ARE STILL TOO CYNICAL FOR THAT, I FEAR-- WHAT YOU DID BRING BACK, HOWEVER, WON'T HURT YOUR SOUL! IT'S COMPASSION! A BURNING DESIRE TO HELP ALL THOSE WHO SUFFER!
CUT IT OUT, PADRE! I'M NO SAINT, AS YOU WELL KNOW--

"Collar John," who first appeared on May 1, 1956 to start a Mission in the rough part of town, had served in the military not as a chaplain but as a Colonel with the commandoes. He had "trained with the top Mohammedan assassins, the jungle bands of Borneo" and had "wiped out a whole enemy platoon one night alone!" Despite this build-up he limited his activities,


MORE COFFEE?
NO TANKS, COLLAR JOHN — I HAD IT — FINE SUPPER — CLEAN BED — BIG BREAKFAST — NOW WHAT DO I HAFTA DO?
AS I TOLD YOU LAST NIGHT, YOU'RE ON YOUR OWN — NO CHARGE — NO ANGLE — NO HOOK!
TH' BOX — "FREE WILL OFFERING" —
EXACTLY WHAT IT SAYS! FOR THOSE WHO CAN AND CARE TO — BEEN NICE SEEING YOU — DROP IN ANY TIME, AND BRING YOUR FRIENDS —
TANKS! T'ANKS, AGAIN! HM-M-M — DIS IS A NEW ONE!
HAROLD GRAY

apart from thrashing two young muggers in an alley attack to befriending the derelicts of Skid Row and helping young folk find active recreation. Like the Padre, Collar John avoided the hard sell. His faith or sect seemed secondary. He was more a doer than a talker. And as one client remarked, "He ain't even give us no tracts to read."

Not all readers were impressed. Stephan P. Ryan in *America* complained about Collar John's "muscular Christianity":

> *How is this miracle (winning converts) brought about? Not, you may be sure, by any display of Christian love, not by the gentle kindliness of the Beatitudes. No, indeed! Our man of the cloth wins his converts by his ability to knock the stuffing out of local thugs.*

Ryan went on to criticize the preacher's tolerance:

> *Collar John is real up-to-date, too; he assures all and sundry that there is none of this denominational nonsense about his mission. Everybody is welcome because, after all, one religion is as good as another.*

On both counts Ryan's criticism had a degree of validity but he misrepresented Gray s portrayal of Collar John. The clergyman did not engage in violence.

Rev. Win Wright, nicknamed the Padre, had served as a chaplain through the most terrible fighting in the war. He visited shut-ins late at night, refrained from any pretensions to academic or military status yet didn't hesitate to speak the "prophetic" word to Mrs. Prissy Guffy, the judge's wife:

> *If you consider your religion a financial investment, here's your money back for the year I've been here! Five-twenty, Madam!*

The unnamed "Reverend" of 1967, a former amateur light-heavyweight champion of conference in College, had also served as a chaplain with combat troops and spent years behind the Iron Curtain. When Mr. Thistle caught him fishing on Sunday he replied:

> *Fishing on Sunday? Perish the thought, Mr. Thistle! Why, I'm only feeding the thieving little scamps!*

In portraying the clergy Gray generally avoided a frontal attack. Instead he presented his ideal clergyman with the strong implication that those who didn't possess such earthy realism and breadth of outlook were less than genuine. Even though they might not actually engage in violence in the conduct of their professional duties they certainly had a strong sympathy for forceful action.

Gray made frequent reference to the Bible, particularly in his Sunday quotation boxes. He found much in it of great value. But he was not above challenging the validity of a particular quotation. To do this on the newspaper comic page in the earlier part of this century was not without its risk. His first jab came in 1924 following an incident in which Annie had slugged a young bully: "Daddy" commended her, "'At a girl, Annie. A straight left turneth away wrath," an obvious parody of Proverbs 15:1, "A soft answer turneth away wrath." This was followed in 1927 with a comment on the more specifically Christian injunction of Matthew 5:39, paraphrased by Annie as, "If yuh get a sock on th' jaw yuh should turn the other cheek." Though Annie resolved to follow the injunction she weakened and beat up a young bully who was mistreating Sandy. And when Gray quoted the third beatitude, "Blessed are the meek for they shall inherit the earth," he added "six feet of it anyway."

A morality that encouraged a meek capitulation to evil-doers had little appeal to Gray. And to the extent he felt certain Biblical injunctions left one vulnerable to such abuse, he challenged them. For the same reason he relished references to Biblical characters, such as Samson and David, who used force in the struggle with evil. Major Eloise "E1" Apt expressed it clearly:

> *Ah re'lize, Annie, you knows me as a killah! A "fast gun"! Well, little David was no slouch with his slingshot;*

HELLO, ANNIE! COMING TO CHURCH TOMORROW?
I SURE AM, PADRE! Y'GOT YOUR SERMON FIGGERED OUT YET?
10-22-60
OH, I'LL TRY TO THINK OF SOMETHING TO DISCUSS! HOW ABOUT "THE POWER OF FAITH"?
IT'S BEEN DONE! BUT MAYBE YOU'VE GOT A NEW ANGLE, EH?
IT'S A GOOD AND TRUE STORY, FROM ANY ANGLE; BUT MAYBE I DO HAVE A SPECIAL REASON TO SELECT THAT TEXT!
WELL, MARLENE AND I WILL BE SEEIN' YOU IN CHURCH, PADRE — AND WE'LL BE LISTENING!
HAROLD GRAY

TAKE THAT, YOU LITTLE IMP- AND NEXT TIME PICK ON SOME KID YOU CAN LICK-
MY BIG BRUDDER'LL FIX YOUR CLOCK FOR THAT-
THINK YOU'RE SMART, DONTCHA? I'LL LEARN YUH A COUPLE OF NEW ONES-
COME HERE, FUNNY FACE - I'LL TEACH YOU HOW TO TREAT A LITTLE LADY-
YOU BIRDS COME BACK LOOKING FOR ANY MORE TROUBLE AND YOU'LL BE DISGUSTED WITH HOW MUCH YOU FIND - WE SURE TOOK 'EM DIDN'T WE 'DADDY'?
'AT A GIRL ANNIE - A STRAIGHT LEFT TURNETH AWAY WRATH-
HAROLD GRAY

Scriptures are full o' them as defended what they felt was right and just! So, I don't figger me believin' true and goin to church reg'lar, was evah meant t'slow my draw agin' any murderin' varmint turned loose on decent people!

Gray clearly promoted a version of the ' holy war' which had some precedent in the Old Testament. The degree to which it is compatible with Christian belief, in either capital punishment administered by the State to protect its citizens (see Romans 13:1-4) or revolutionary violence dedicated to the overthrow of tyranny, is an ongoing debate. However, few Christians would condone retribution by an individual or small group beyond the limits of civil law.

In a more positive vein Gray also challenged those Biblical passages which suggested that financial success was the inevitable outcome of righteousness. He lampooned the man who remarked of Mr. Phineas P. Pinchpenny, "I've always said a just and generous man will prosper'." (Psalm 1:3)

It was the prudent folk-knowledge which appealed most to Gray: admonitions to work, to discipline children, to exercise self-control, to treat animals fairly, to love neighbors and to practice hospitality and humility.

Prayer, usually quite folksy in style, played a conspicuous role in the strip. On the very first day Annie prayed:

And please make me a real good little girl so some nice people will adopt me. Then I can have a papa and mama to love and if it's not too much trouble I'd like a dolly too. Amen.

In petitioning for her needs Annie was clearly willing to change her own behavior, though this could lead, at times, to using prayer as a bargaining tool.

Most prayers, however, were intercessions for the needs of others. Following the shooting of Angus Flint Annie prayed:

Aw, please make Mr. Flint get well real quick an' having whoever shot him get what's coming to 'em an' get it good an' plenty. An' please have "Daddy" Warbucks hurry up an' come back, too, 'cause we need him awful bad around here. Amen.

For the seriously wounded "Daddy :

I can't pray swell like a high-priced preacher. But I mean this. See? Please, please made "Daddy" live. Oh, what's the use? He'd never listen to me. I don't know any swell words. I never even read th' Bible. But "Daddy." Oh, if He just knew what a good guy "Daddy" is.

At times the approach was quite pragmatic. After acknowledging that "some people claim prayin' doesn't do any special good," Annie observed, "it's a cinch it doesn't do any harm And there was the General who stoutly insisted he wouldn t pray himself but said to Annie, "You mention my name, eh? It couldn t hurt."

But at other times the attitude was much more mature. When Kit Karson asked, "Tell me again about that prayin stuff, Mrs. Eke! I don t want to overlook no angle!" Mrs. Eke replied, "But it's not an angle, prayin' ain't." When Kit experienced trouble finding words Annie told her, "Y don't need words, Kit! Just say it with your heart!"

But prayer was never intended to discourage or excuse people from doing what they could do themselves. Annie put it sharply, "They say it helps lots more if yuh try helpin' yourself all yuh can Daddy, ' likewise, when Jane Jones s life was in danger:

I fear I've never been much of a religious man! But I've known men with the hearts of saints and archangels! Men who wore no mark or dress or any smug smirk of sanctity, yet performed what seemed miracles! "God helps them who help themselves"! Oh, please, let me help her!

Though most prayers were uttered in moments of crisis, there were instances of prayers expressing gratitude for blessings received.

Prayer led naturally to the subject of God. But the name was seldom used. Mrs. Sleet used it once, "Go—and God bless and protect you." There was reference to God-fearin' folks and people fighting for God and country. Robert Browning's lines were quoted frequently·

God's in his heaven
All's right with the world

The personal pronoun He' was sometimes used. But Gray preferred the term Providence. In Annie s words:

Sometimes it seems as if maybe there is some power, that steps in to help yuh at th' right time, if you try hard enough and wish hard enough. Some folks call it Providence. Some call it luck, It's too deep for me. Whatever it is and whatever you want to call it, that helped us save Janey, I'm sure grateful.

Even faith in some impersonal Providence was not without its doubt. But there was some earnest seeking.

Though Gray seldom if ever used the name Christ he did create two fairly well developed Christ-figures. The first was Sam the tailor who appeared in 1940. Sam was a bachelor who refused to reveal his last name (the Messianic secret?), meekly took a slap on the cheek and played the role of the Good Samaritan when he found a young woman lying near death on the street. He carried her home, engaged a doctor to care for her at this own expense and even gave his rare blood for an emergency transfusion.

In an extended conversation with Annie, Sam insisted that neither of them should judge a wealthy but odious Peter La Plata who had abandoned his young child and left his parents to live in poverty. The dialogue between the two is important because it illustrated the difficulty Gray had accepting the traditional portrait of Christ:

SAM: *Remember Annie, "Judge not that ye be not judged."*
ANNIE: *I s'pose you're right! I'm too young to know ever'thing. But I'm not too young to have my own 'pinions*
SAM: *But remember Let every man be swift to hear, slow to wrath."*
ANNIE: *Isn't that (what La Plata had done) bad?*
SAM: *Well, it's not GOOD, Annie. But it is not our business. We should not set ourselves to judge over such cruel souls as Peter La Plata. A HIGHER court shall judge his kind, Annie.*
ANNIE: *Hm. . m. . You're right, o' course. Doggon it, Sam, you're ALWAYS right.*

But doubt remained.

Then on March 15, 1941 after reading a letter from relatives "over there" Sam decided to make his pilgrimage. Word later

came back through Driftwood, a young refugee lad, that Sam had been captured, marched by soldiers up a hill between two thieves. He had been betrayed by a man in the village for a reward. There was even an oblique affirmation of his "resurrection":

DRIFTWOOD: *You will see him again.*

ANNIE: *WHAT? Then you think he got away? You think he's still ALIVE?*

DRIFTWOOD: *Alive? Yes, Annie. Believe me. He is more alive today than ever.*

The most controversial aspect of Sam's personality was his involvement with the resistance movement as a spy of guerrilla:

ANNIE: *Just what did he do over there?*

DRIFTWOOD: *I don't know. He would come to see my father, very late at night, and they would talk. In the morning he would be gone. And later a tunnel would be blown shut, with a train full of enemy soldiers inside. Or an enemy general and his staff would disappear till the ice went out in the spring.*

ANNIE: *Leapin' Lizards! I never thought Sam could do things like that.*

DRIFTWOOD: *Sam help to kill enemy soldiers? Maybe not, but they came to murder and to loot and burn. They tortured Sam's uncle.*

ANNIE: *Hm. . .m. . .m. Do you believe Sam had a hand in those things, too?*

DRIFTWOOD: *No. But the enemy was afraid of him and hated him because he kept us from starving or from giving up and dying.*

Gray's ambivalence is evident. He clearly wanted to identify Christ with a guerrilla movement which refused to remain passive in the face of aggression and yet he hesitated to say he actually took human life.

The second Christ-figure was presented in the person of Joe Christmas, a bum considered a disgrace by the community. Joe cared for the wounded and oppressed, spent all he made aiding the poor, turned the other cheek, practiced what others only preached and admonished his hearers not to hate:

No man is all bad. And hating and evil man merely lowers you toward his level and puts you at a disadvantage.

Yet Joe spoke out in criticism of the town authorities and was criticized by those who wanted "peace":

PIETY TILBURY: *Why can't we just ignore politics and live peacefully and happily?*

Gray's dealings with basics: Supplication . . .

I'VE NEVER SEEN ANYONE SO HORRIBLY SMASHED UP--AND LIVE--I COULD ONLY DO MY BEST --AND PRAY--
YOUR BEST WAS ALWAYS PRETTY GOOD, AS I RECALL--
I'VE SEEN TOUGH, BRAVE YOUNG MARINES SLIP AWAY, IN SPITE OF EVERYTHING--BUT, THAT CHILD! NO! NO! PLEASE! DON'T LET THAT HAPPEN TO HER!
HAROLD GRAY
AMEN!

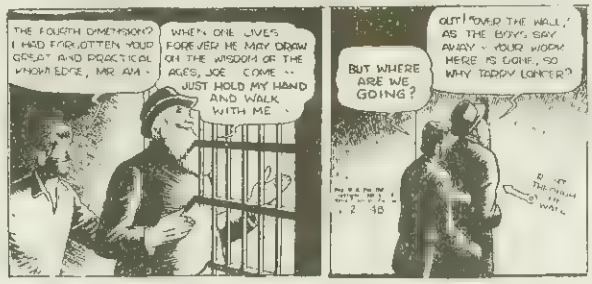
. . .thanksgiving . . .

--AND THANK THEE ESPECIALLY FOR RESTORING TO HEALTH THIS DEAR ONE WHO HAS BECOME A BELOVED MEMBER OF THIS HUMBLE FAMILY--AMEN--
AMEN-
FAMILY--I--I NEVER KNEW BEFORE WHAT A REAL FAMILY COULD BE LIKE BUT I--THAT IS--I'M NOT--
ONE OF THE FAMILY? BUT OF COURSE YOU ARE, MY CHILD-

. . .faith .

BUT IT MIGHT BE SOMETHIN CATCHIN- WE COULD CALL A COP- HE'D GET AN AMBULANCE WE DON'T KNOW WHO SHE IS OR WHAT'S WRONG WITH HER-
WE KNOW SHE IS VERY ILL-- THAT IS ENOUGH QUICK--RUN FOR THE DOCTOR
B-B-BUT SAM! WHERE YOU GOIN TO TAKE HER?
HOME-- WHERE ELSE COULD SHE HAVE BETTER CARE?

. . . and, finally, fantasy.


THE FOURTH DIMENSION? I HAD FORGOTTEN YOUR GREAT AND PRACTICAL KNOWLEDGE, MR. AM-
WHEN ONE LIVES FOREVER HE MAY DRAW ON THE WISDOM OF THE AGES, JOE COME-- JUST HOLD MY HAND AND WALK WITH ME
BUT WHERE ARE WE GOING?
OUT! "OVER THE WALL," AS THE BOYS SAY AWAY - YOUR WORK HERE IS DONE, SO WHY TARRY LONGER?

PAW TILBURY: *Why? Because of men like Jerry Gaws, for one thing. And mostly because of folks who want to ignore the whole thing and have peace—at any price.*

PIETY TILBURY: *But* couldn't *we, if it weren't for trouble-makers like this Joe Christmas?*

TIDDELY TILBURY: *Man sounds like a Communist or a Fascist or something. The things he says about our town council, Mayor, and especially Jerry Gaws. Why. This is libel!*

ANNIE: *Is it libel if it's* true?

TIDDELY TILBURY: *But, Annie! True or not, why does this Joe Christmas have to* stir up *everybody? Why can't he just let sleeping dogs lie?*

Joe gave the answer:

Most nice people want peace. But there is no peace, Annie! There is only sleep, or a sort of stupor. It may be filled with beautiful dreams *of peace! And people always resent the awakening from such dreams. All decent people profess to believe in honesty, decency, charity. But when they see those virtues violated they close their eyes. It's easier. Dishonesty, sin, violence! Ignore them and they'll go away, they hope!*

When Joe later commented, "I think the 'good' people hate me the worst," Oliver Warbucks responded, 'Ha-ha! Sure, Joe. It's been that way for at least a couple of thousand years

For Joe Christmas too there was the suggestion of some form of "resurrection," even though it by-passed rather than overcame death.

Finally a word about those beliefs generally subsumed under the name of salvation. As indicated in the "Search for Justice" chapter of this article, Gray believed in forgiveness, rehabilitation, redemption—and not simply upon the basis of the person's deservedness. He made no attempt to ground this belief in any explicit doctrine of salvation or atonement, but he often associated forgiveness and redemption with his clergy or "Christ" figures.

However, Gray did have a deep suspicion of the religious phony who peddled cheap grace. Forgiveness there should be, but only if accepted in penitent humility; rehabilitation, but only for those open to moral renewal; material and financial assistance to the poor, but not to the destruction of individual initiative or dignity; sacrificial service, but not an unending and demeaning capitulation to insensitive and ungrateful thugs. n

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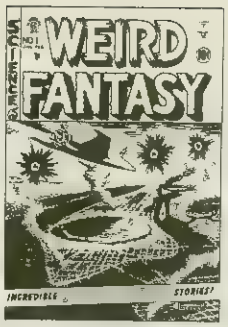
WEIRD SCIENCE

The complete 22-issue run of **WEIRD SCIENCE** features the artwork of Wally Wood, Joe Orlando, Al Williamson (some with Frazetta), editor/scripter Al Feldstein. Some of the stories are EC adaptations of work by Ray Bradbury. When **WEIRD SCIENCE** was cancelled, EC continued publishing science fiction in the comic **WEIRD SCIENCE-FANTASY** (later titled **INCREDIBLE SCIENCE FICTION**).
Four volumes in slipcase, ppd: $85.
(SUBSCRIPTION PRICE: $70.)



WEIRD FANTASY

Companion set to the **COMPLETE WEIRD SCIENCE,** this Feldstein-edited title also ran 22 issues and features the same line-up of artists (and adds Severin and Elder) and Bradbury adaptations. It was also discontinued by EC and once again the thread was picked up in the title **WEIRD SCIENCE-FANTASY.**
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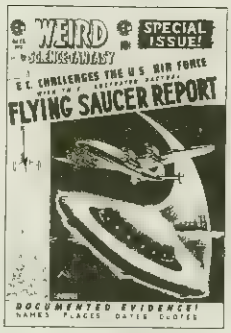
WEIRD SCIENCE-FANTASY



EC's final sf title, it featured work by the cream of EC's artists of the fantastic, including Wally Wood, Al Williamson, Joe Orlando, and adding Bernie Krigstein and Jack Davis. It's first issue was numbered 23, which continues the numbering from the two cancelled comics **WEIRD SCIENCE** and **WEIRD FANTASY** (both of which expired with #22). This comic was renamed **INCREDIBLE SCIENCE FICTION** with #30. The final issue was #33, ending an eleven issue run.
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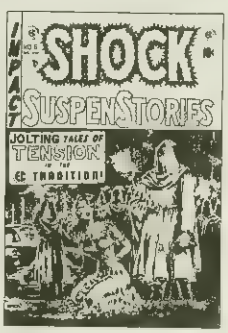

SHOCK SUSPENSTORIES

These eighteen comics contain stories which range from the twist-ending short story to *film noir*-like thrillers to socially relevant pieces which are, in the words of critic Bhob Stewart, a "head-on collision with the real issues of American life." Among the artists represented here are Wally Wood, Joe Orlando, Jack Davis, George Evans and Reed Crandall.
Three volumes in slipcase, ppd: $70.
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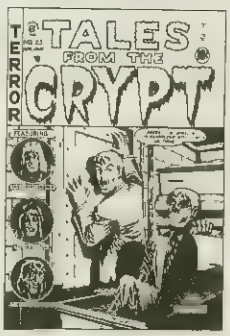
CRYPT



One of three horror titles published by EC (another one, **VAULT OF HORROR,** is now available in this series, see right. The third, **HAUNT OF FEAR,** is yet to be published), this Feldstein-edited comic featured artwork by many EC favorites including Feldstein, Jack Davis, "Ghastly" Graham Ingels, Johnny Craig and (in later issues) Bernie Krigstein. Originally titled **CRYPT OF TERROR,** it was renamed **TALES FROM THE CRYPT,** and ran 30 issues.
Five volumes in slipcase, ppd $100.
(SUBSCRIPTION PRICE: $80.)

THE VAULT OF HORROR

Another in the trio of EC's horror titles, the 29-issue run of **VAULT** was edited by Johnny Craig, who not only did practically every "Vault Keeper" story but *all* the covers! Once again, EC's staple horror artists appear here, including Al Feldstein, Jack Davis, Graham Ingels and eventually Bernie Krigstein.
Five volumes in slipcase, ppd: $100.
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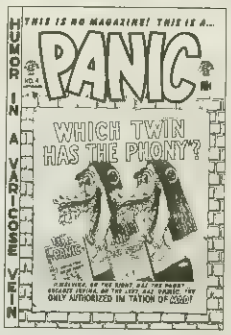
PANIC



12 issues, the companion title to **MAD.** Edited by Feldstein (the editor of **MAD** magazine since 1956) and featuring many of the **MAD** comic crew. Humor in a varicose vein!
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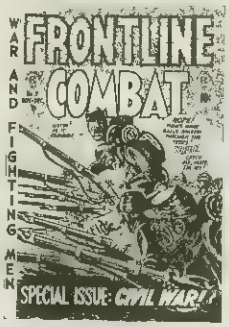
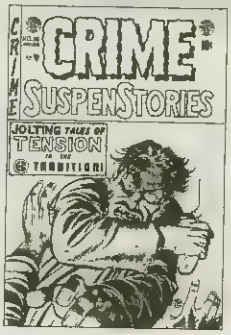


FRONTLINE

This Kurtzman-edited comic features work by him and other action-oriented comic EC artists; Jack Davis, John Severin (or the Severin-Bill Elder team) and Wally Wood. Sprinkled throughout are Kurtzman's special Civil War stories, like all his EC war work historical accuracy is a hallmark.
Three volumes in slipcase, ppd: $70.
(SUBSCRIPTION PRICE: $60.)

CRIME SUSPENSTORIES



The 27 issues comprise five volumes, packaged in a deluxe slipcase with all the quality you have come to expect! The emphasis is pulpy-crime drama of the James M. Cain type, with the Feldstein flavor and the distinctive EC slant. Artists included in this collection are primarily Craig, Ingels, Davis, Wood, Kamen, Evans, and Krigstein.
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Little Icon Annie:

'Who's That Little Chatterbox?'

By Donald Phelps

The celebrated eyes of Little Orphan Annie and her supporting cast were pupil-less holes, until, in the mid-'40s, Harold Gray, in one of his spasmodic tenders of cordiality toward his public, outfitted them with erratically situated pupils—with the effect of junkies' eyes: a sort of tokenism which neither Gray's early frontier spirit, nor the sensibilities of *Little Orphan Annie*'s readers could endure. Mostly, however, the characters of the strip were obviously masked figures and were also undoubtedly peering into a space beyond their own, or the readers', immediate accommodation.

All illustrations from the collection of Rick Marschall.

Those empty eyes were a symbol of the black, measureless space which was the comic strip's cardinal element; and I look forward to the day when Leonard Starr—currently engaged in the most respectful and amiable pastiche yet of *Little Orphan Annie*, under the show-biz title *Annie*—will find himself capable of quietly jettisoning a convention which has nothing at all to do with his own breezy, square-jawed style. The circlet eyes of Starr's version are merely a mildly inapropos, gently perplexing signature retained from a now-browning document. But the eyes of Harold Gray's figures were the central marker of his style, and his metaphysic: the distance of people from each other and the customary, yet frighteningly detachable, masks they wear. They are symbols, too, of the darkness in which Gray continually lodged them, even at noonday; the black apertures that were the usual doorways of dining-room or library; the sense of a sky that was a ceiling, even in depictions of full daylight. And they are eyes which are both observant of, and terribly inaccessible to, the world-at-large; eyes that indeed amount to appropriate mirrors of a bleak, denuded, miserly world, replete with matter for shock, terror, or simply skepticism beyond words.

They are transmitters of the world, and they are masks of the world. Compare and contrast these with the figures of Modigliani, with those imperturbable circlets which link the figures, their diffuse and complacent sensuosity, to the abstraction of Modigliani's own drawing that John Held, Jr., was to mimic successfully: patient, mock-languid, solicitous of the mating-dance between his funky-erotic light and color, and his showoffish-serene, desultory-seeming design. In Gray there is no abstraction whatsoever. Bare as his drawing may seem—and be—the lean compositions and the stony pace wield their own heft and texture. The world in which his little orphan moves, in her charade of nineteenth-century Victorian convention, is one of the most wintry imagined by a comic-strip artist, a continuous study in distance, silence, and cold light; light that exhibits much and reveals little. It is light which seems, itself, a mask: the headlights on a winter road, which pick out the feathery fringes of shrubbery, the furrows and dents of the road immediately ahead, and the stoic, phantom shape of a cast-iron dog which forecasts the doom of the dog-hating hit-and-runner, Elmer Pinchpenny. It improvises grim sculptures from the figure of "Daddy" Warbucks, disguised as a common seaman in one of the numerous alternate lives he leads away from Annie, in a waterfront cafe, awaiting news from the underground. It, the light, frames and portrays, and spotlights illusions, like the bewitching aureole which surrounds Punjab's menacing abracadabra with his vanishing-cloak. Gray's light seems more often a partner of the darkness than its dispeller.

Gray's grim architectonics emphasize what the long and ever-more-dreary succession of Little Orphan Annie's would-be guardians (and, Lord help us, in one or two instances, reformers) and even the genial and talented Leonard Starr, have, wilfully or helplessly, failed to perceive: to wit, that *Little Orphan Annie*'s scaffolding, the "Harks!" and "Yi"s, and "Arfl"s (the latter appropriated by Popeye) all belong to the charade aspect of a classic-paced epic whose tone is doom-laden almost beyond articulation.

"*We* think it's a pretty good old world, don't we, Molly?" besought "Daddy" Warbucks, in Al Capp's late-'40s parody, *Sweet Fannie Gooney*, addressing his appeal to a near-supine scrub-woman who obliged with "Lovely, Sir. . . lovely!"—which is a wonderful Capp image of dumb, impervious callousness, such as he produced with much virtuosity in his "liberal" days. It hardly, however, nicks the tempest-weathered tissue of the original, for Capp, as much as any of the others—as much as his brother, Elliot, who took Annie's narrative in hand (with Tex Blaisdell's images); as much as the deservedly forgotten concocter of the ghastly Saturday TV-styled version which called halt to Annie's Annie-tators, as much as Starr—was flummoxed by the enigma of Harold Gray's style. That style carried the very brand name of elusiveness; dealing, as it does, in, and with, the unseen; i.e., the world in its immensity, which is always hovering at, issuing ominous rumbles or screams from, the strip's peripherae—those edges which are crucial in Gray's envisioning, the fringes of a world whose characters are constantly peering off the limits, the boundaries, toward vistas which are reflected in classic Gray shorthand: fingers that tremble at chins, fatuous grins, or empty eyes that become popping cyphers of curiosity, bemusement, or horror.

A typical view of Annie, which has furnished forth some of Gray's most eloquent, suspenseful sequences, has her spying out a town to which, in one of her periodic, acquiescent exiles from "Daddy," she has newly come. Gray achieves fugitive panoramic effect, a little mosaic of his own fascination with cities and their casual, piecemeal phenomena, from the repeated views of Annie in the foreground, lower right or left-hand corner, the panel's vertical border paralleled by the wall of the building against which she is standing, commenting, ruminating, popping out little squib-like judgments about the tiny figures that we see as from the back row of some airless movie-house, as they walk or gesture in aimless-seeming

abstraction. Or sometimes Annie walks along those implacable walls dabbed with shadow, of some brick building or stone country-fence beloved of Harold Gray, nibbling tidbits of insight from the near-impervious blankness of a city. It was the inanimate, or near-inanimate, aspects of a city, it seems to me, which fed Harold Gray's visual—not imagination, but appetite and gloomy elan.

The jaded, yet alert, chance-reckoning tone of Annie's monologues (some of the dryest, most downright prose to be found even in those monologue-possessed days of the comic strip) make an impeccable, an indispensable, text to Gray's inchmeal pantomime. Throughout these reconnoiterings, Sandy is silent and without discernible personality, an avatar more tactful than even the Asp, as against the obsequious gallery-bids of other comic-strip mutts, like a gangster's bodyguard: small cause for marvel, in the Fritz Lang-domesticated territory through which the two move. Sandy's presence emphasizes the eerie counterpoint of chatter and silence that Gray establishes and repeatedly recalls, during the monologues of Annie and others.

Sandy's reticence emphasized the staid, formal weight, as of an unceasing ceremony, that distinguished the movements of the characters, like the figures of a primitive frieze, and even the progression of events. The hypnotic rhythms of Harold Gray, which have often been haphazardly identified as "suspense," consist of just this, I think: the way he attenuates and *scales* action, grinding it against a lowering, excruciatingly heavy sense of time. Gray's puritanical delight lies in those longueurs, those prospects of waiting and routine, which are as sweat-boxes to other comic-strip artists, panicky-solicitous of their fans. Annie and Sandy lost in the woods, or Annie sweating out in all senses a sojourn in the orphanage, her home-site, under the cronish reign of Miss Asthma, seem to excite a zest in Gray for seeking out prickles of suspicion, moody curiosity, or reflections on the mechanics of survival, which supply the genuine texture of these long-haul ordeals.

Even the moments of "relief"—that is, Gray's slapstick with its vengeful, demeaning overtones (Miss Asthma mistaking Annie for a ghost, tumbling downstairs into a laundry basket)—are peculiarly deadened, with no funny or terrific resonance. The foreground is pre-empted by a different sort of suspense, geared to the sheer blankness of expectancy from one day to the next, and spiritual attrition which Gray's rivals, from Hitchcock down, have shown no understanding of, or predilection for. At the same time he is able to suggest a buried, impounded violence, violence as possibility, in his figures' girths, their litheness or inertness; and able to portray the imminence of such violence—a motion begun, a character barely curbing his or her savage response. He can discern and analyze casual, innocuous-seeming gestures or tableaux—like a small-town dude fingering his tie or Annie at her school books under the lamplight—with a dreamlike insistence, a muted electricity, which suggest the paintings of Cornells Rutenberg.

Threading these various vignettes and glimpses is the feeling to which I think Gray's major power can be traced: that of his forging a double perspective—the formality of fifteenth-century "primitive" painting, or the classical stage, with the gruffness, wariness, soreness, and sometimes startled gentleness, of the voice which never for any length of time releases us. I mean, referring to primitive painting, the peculiar intent upon lodging figures within their own space, conveying an authority to that space, which Gray achieves in his loving address to rooms, desks, tables, books, or dishes. Such space and the composition which it seems to dictate hold priority over the action in Gray's world, rather than the reverse (the foregrounding and amplifying of action) to which comic strip after comic strip, from *The Katzenjammer Kids* to *Kerry Drake*, have accustomed us, and, commonly, tended to inundate the factuality of action in delectable cataracts of color and design. Gray is as free of these and other erotic shenanigans, and felicities—plot invention, richness of detail—as any such artist I can remember.

The surfaces of his stories are hard-stitched, of a didactic intensity which has as its background pessimism of the deepest sort. The "story-telling" aptitude for which I have heard Gray, with cheerful inanity, praised again and again is, I think, the valid product of this quality, and forms our awareness of a text—Annie's words, the juiceless, deliberate words of all—which actually holds together a "plot" of minimum invention and variety of movement. Here, the time-killing longueurs and muttered running commentaries, the compulsive chewing-over of, say, Sunday's revelation or catastrophe on Monday (Tuesday anticipating Wednesday; Wednesday resuming, etc.) do their moony parts toward furthering Gray's brooding rhythms, and also keep to the fore his favorite narrative element—the chorus of gossips, gulls, gawkers. The general impression of a Gray episode is not an exciting or beguiling accretion of plot complications, but rather his own hammering, into the beaten bronze of a fable, a little coin-patter of intrigues, scandal, retribution; all giving the impression of resonance, of emotional plenty, through those gravid shapes, and those mulling, obsessive, soliloquies.

But the most insidious single effect of Harold Gray's art is the impression of staid-looking surface which may, at any time, be peeled or torn or simply curl away, like those decals, then called "transfer pictures," which Ovaltine, sponsors of the *Little Orphan Annie* radio show, issued at one time. This is another contribution of the gossips with their Monday morning hash: They keep the pot boiling, and at the same time, present a satiric counterpoint/contrast to the world's tribunal, with which Harold Gray identifies his readers implicitly—The Voice of the People an any *Daily News* editorial page will attest. That tribunal is like a constant murmur, which we hear ventriloquially through this character and that. A murmur to which the characters, even when alone, seem impelled to respond, in some of the leanest yet—I'm tempted to say "musically"—expressive monologues in comic strips: hectic arias of explanation, self-exculpation, prophecy, apprehension; almost totally devoid of the wise-cracking plumage, which *The Gumps*, say, could always assure. In that strip, the rhetorical preenings of Andy, Min, Bim, and Tilda represented a kind of wealth, a triumphant pre-emption of style as honor, even amid lower middle-class doldrums. Likewise the slingshot-paced ripostes of *Ella Cinders*: Even the browbeating (everybody else's brow, unlike *Annie*'s personae) stepmother was not begrudged—"You're so lazy," she barks at Ella at one point, "You remind me of the man who invented the Model T Ford so he wouldn't have to empty out his pockets."

Each character of Gray's is seen within a monkish cubicle of his or her own loneliness, a stark presence underscored by the stormcloud cross-hatching, the packed speech balloons which hang like joyless blimps above them: the awareness of events proceeding *through* them, of their bleak histories exerting a tensile insistence of their own, which you never felt when Min and Andy were jumpily hustling their speeches along, hoping the reader could hold out for another panel or so, everybody's got his budget, folks. They are never lethargic, never simply dawdling. There is a constant crackle in the air around them, as a short-wave speaker about to broadcast long-waited, perhaps long-dreaded, news from the front. There is here depicted, as everywhere else with Harold Gray, an awareness that what many eschew as boredom is a positive

calcium in the tissue of life itself.

This has to do with Gray's belief that the best discoveries we can expect are piecemeal—never expect the wall to split asunder, as far as our fellow humans are concerned. I can recall, prior to the settling in of Maw Green (Annie's Irish landlady in 1931, and, later, in charge of the Irish comedy concession at the bottom of the Sunday page), a top-strip entitled *The Private Life of . . .* (a shoe, a flower, a ghost): the "private life" of which consisted not of Hans Christian Andersen rhapsodies by any means, but the plain record of what one might expect to befall any of these objects or entities. The sense of history being immured within a retaining wall of evidence, and, beyond that, blankness, is what enfevers Gray in the "private moments" of his own characters. These are moments of release —not at all for the imagination, but for the watchful eye.

The bare carpentry of the "little orphan" fable was sufficient armature, it seems, for the dry fatalism, the dour wariness, which really preoccupied Harold Gray. It also kept Annie, that smart little stepper, on a constant pavement-strip of cold journalism, quite separate from the professed sentimentalities of her sufferings in the orphanage (from Miss Asthma, or derisive little peers like Monk), her snubbing and frigid persecution by Mrs. Warbucks, and her two sinister-clownish protegees—porcupine-haired Selby Addlebert Piffleberry, whose acronymic afford Gray and Annie many a day's vengeful laugh; and the marionette-like Count De Tour, with his physical resemblance to a defrocked Jack-in-the-Pulpit plant with tubular duck trousers and painted-looking hair and monocle. But most of such narrative lumber, and the smarmier aspects of Annie's and "Daddy's" (so she always called him; those inverted commas remained to the last) affinity were briskly and, to all evidence willingly, put aside as soon as possible in favor of Gray's medley of journalistic watchfulness, knowingness, and morose foreknowledge.

The conventions Gray was compelled to sustain, like the small-town nostalgia, were treated with the most vinegary regard via depictions of termite-colonies of righteous biddies, male and female, or fledgling psychopaths like "Pig Eye" Mack: Sinclair Lewis challenged on his own turf. The Silos (who, by the way, became regulars on the radio-show, which insistently and with some commercial heart-flutters, perhaps, anchored Annie to Simmons Corners) never appeared much after their initial introduction; indeed, most of Annie's acquaintances, surrogate parents, and beneficiaries seem tacitly to accept, on her departure, that they will seldom, if ever, see her again; they become readily inured to their loss.

Annie's true vocation is that of the child spy, her picaresque passage one of life-long, itinerant espionage; that of, for sure, spying out the adult world. In this pursuit, she—as Harold Gray's agent—confirmed and articulated an image of this world, an "adult world" which even her adult readers might deem inaccessible. It seemed aloof, authoritative, massively dark imbued with sinister authority and touched with that spirit of Eld which Poe, projecting himself in the "real world," discovered in the mysterious crew and captain of "Ms. Found in a Bottle." Annie's occupation is to squint out and pry open—not with the method of a journalist or private eye but with the random sniffing and peeping of an outsider—the occasional quartz-glints of this intrigue, or that secret, or some guarded vulnerable passion which sometimes traces the flinty faces of these adult structures. Most of all her spying reveals these to be exactly as they see: the pantomime, the glimpsed group-scenes, such as images of Big Business clustered around what appears to be the identical Spanish oak desk with identical Renaissance inlay, before the identical French windows, on every occasion; a repetition which yet, like the images of a dream, or the tableaux scenes in Griffith's historical films, is pitched to an absolute evocation. In other words, adults as stage-managed by a child, who sees *all* ages past the corridor of the immediate next few years as a common lunar landscape. Gray's narrative rhythms so prevail throughout his depictions of these wielders and connivers that one hardly notice the paucity of detail; or, more accurately, Gray's lack of interest in, and cursory handling of, such detail. The same applies to his depictions of menial labor, of which he is professedly enamored; although you can sense that he knows, say, something of driving a truck, or working in a general store, or peddling papers, the details themselves take on no inventive life; it's the routine, and the endurance it exacts, and the space left for Annie's watchfulness that engage him most. (Was ever an artist more distinguished by those things in which he is *not* interested?) The world of rich observation seems to recede under Gray's touch as though the visual were being slowly, subtly absorbed by the aural.

Was there ever a comic-strip artist who exhibited so little pleasure in—and even, granting Harold Gray's faith (whatever it may have been) its full allowance of heterodoxy—so little *faith* in the drawing act as such? at least as a conveyor of visual data, as a transmitter of visual intelligence. When Annie, on short commons in the forest, encounters Sandy returning from some private dinner trove, she exclaims: "You not only look different—you *are* different! You're as tight as a little drum!" I am here, however, to attest that not only does Sandy not look a particle different from his usual self; I doubt seriously that the Continental Op, elbow-to-elbow with Sherlock Holmes, could discern any difference; and I don't believe any, at least in *visual terms*, was intended. It is not merely a question of Gray's drawing style being unable to accommodate certain facts, as is true of many realistically oriented styles; it seems a matter of Gray's drawing being oriented to exclusion of, or the most budgety skimping on, much of the sensuous detail which is often the comic-strip author's essential syntax. I feel, looking at a *Little Orphan Annie* strip, that the panels are riddled with secret pinholes, not readily accessible to my eyes, through which the crucial facts of each episode might be divined, and none too clearly, at that. I also experience the slightly chilling sensation of Gray's voice declaring: "These particulars are not so important; time will wash them out anyway. Why not take time's side?" I can remember a New Year's 1937 Sunday page in which Annie describes human relationships as resembling "A kind of river." The characters and scenes of *Little Orphan Annie*, graphic and resonant though they be, seem, at the same time, constantly on the point of submerging in a Mississippi of words, of text; and, as the strip proceeds into the '40s, '50s, and '60s—and the importunities of a still more brutal journalism than that of the '30s—the supporting personages seem half-faded into journalistic prose (like the hapless walk-on, "that nice Mr. Sam Smith," stomped to death by teen-age thugs) upon their initial appearance.

In this I find Gray the most credible witness I know, or can easily imagine, against the critical hashish-dream which declares the comic strip to be a "purely visual medium," a phrase which makes as little sense when applied to films, including the silent ones, the best of which made unrestrained and consistently intelligent use of text. Gray's images are inseparable from his text; they at once enact and counterpoint his text, as they are committed, in league with his text, to the theme of history, including the most personal, writing itself day by day, for the eyes of posterity, and the judgment of the world. His cautious, skimpish, austere art reminds one of Jean-Marie Straub's and Danielle Huillet's fine films; in which, as in

The Chronicle of Anna Magdalena Bach, the image and text work virtually as one, each supporting and abiding by the other. In both these ashen artists, the text is like an immense scroll, which is ideally regarded as unwinding itself through eternity. Like Straub, time after time, Gray, especially in the later Annie episodes, becomes enamored of images repeated—or, a single image prolonged—in panel after panel, in a way which engraves the event upon the attention of the reader. A daily strip will feature Annie, in bed, overhearing conversation among five little children about their bickering parents. Or, on a Sunday page, shortly before Gray's death in the late '60s, he features the back of Annie's head as she listens to two bad-white disaster-engineers named Tar and Knuks quarreling, framed in the window facing her. Even in 1936, when Annie is selling flowers on the East Side with a Lady from Another Day named Ginger, Gray achieves one of his treasured effects, the stream of a social panorama via few figures, and the commentary—philosophy-salted as usual—of Ginger and Annie, a vest-pocket transcription of the kind of syndicated column which ballooned the fame of Runyon and Winchell, with the last-panel sign-off line: "Buy a flower, Mister?"

The little-girl body which Annie trotted through these various episodes, of course, was a mere dolly-truck for a spirit which once belonged to Odysseus, or Melmoth the Wanderer. A not-too-remote cousin of Maisie, in James's *What Maisie Knew*, Annie, however, brought not a particle of a child's vulnerability to her nosings into the crannies of adulthood. When she would bewail the "death" of "Daddy" Warbucks in one of his many periodic liquidations (after which, like the durable corporation he was, he'd reorganize himself), Annie's grief, though sincere, was also unquestionably ritualistic. (Gray tried to vary this in the early '40s in one of Annie's last bids for little girldom by dispatching her into a catatonic trance, whereupon she was mothered back to her standard of sanity by a frigid old spinster, who was earlier impervious to Annie's worldview. I persist in thinking: so unconvincing was this collapse of Annie's—on the basis of her previous history—that the whole thing was a brilliant, extemporaneous set-up designed to prevail over the aged stalactite with shock therapy while gaining some repose during which she, Annie, could reorient her plans for the future.)

The most instructive comparison/contrast awaits the interested reader between the far-reaching plateau of age (not precocity) on which Annie builds her campfire, and Skeezix's dry, graceful acquisition of age, done as a low-keyed tone-poem, in Frank King's *Gasoline Alley*; during which all of Skeezix's gaucheries, escapades, and indecisions are drenched in a style represented by an unerring grace of perspective that bespeaks King's loving, watchful detachment, usually the equivalent of a few yards away, from his subject. The style of Harold Gray was more akin in *its* detachment, and in Gray's hungry embrace of formula, to some long-hallowed classical rite. To have Annie "grow up" as did Skeezix would have been inane to the verge of obscenity. Annie was as old as ever she need to be—she and the hero of *The Tin Drum* might have exchanged pointers—or did they?—within two years after her first appearance, in 1924, in the tow of Mrs. Warbucks. Gray knew what he was doing when he burned down—in a scarily drawn and brilliant Sunday page November 18, 1928—Miss Asthma's orphan asylum, of Annie's infancy, and all records of her parentage. She was frozen in time as a priestess, a perennial caretaker of the musing, disenchanted voice which Harold Gray conferred on her; likewise frozen was a point of view which held the world as eternally, basically static—a view not so much pessimistic (although certainly that) as wary, assessing, not always ungentle.

I know of no other comic strip that is so governed by such a view and mood and consistency of will enacting both over and over. It's the only one I am aware of which can be described as "philosophical" without reference to the nature or quality of the philosophy; for, whereas a strip like *The Gumps* enlisted, at times, and *ad hoc* philosophizing, dishing out views and aphorisms from its steam-table, *Little Orphan Annie* offered a perspective of the world, and an attempt to assemble and summarize one's experience of that world which is embodied in the very drawing; especially in Harold Gray's proclivity for, espousal of, structure. As in primitive painting and the classical work which issued from it, the laws of space and distance and balance are presences in themselves. The furniture, whatever its paucity of sensuous allure, assumes in its own glowering, stolid bulk, like the settings of Fritz Lang in their Expressionist menace, the dimension of a character. One is dealing with a strip in which the true protagonist is the Law: not only the "law and order" which is regularly and derisively cited by his liberal critics (and which, according to any careful reading, Gray himself regards with a very doubtful eye); but the laws of structure and space which dictate, say, the usual pedestrian distancing (always in equivalent of a "Medium CS" on camera) and centering of actions, the "normal-eye view" of figures. When Gray, on very rare occasion, adopts an "angle shot," an interpretive perspective, it's invariably a view from above (Old Jake standing outside his grocery store on the East Side); which accords with Gray's frosty affection for buildings, for stone surfaces, and the cities which house them.

He never within my memory employed the opposite, a fact brought home to me by its use in his successors' work, in depicting skyscrapers, for example. Gray's esteem (narrow-eyed) for power is no such yokel's veneration. He is without hope, though surely not without faith, as far as worldly power is concerned. Yet the bulk of whatever affection he can yield is for the cities as maps, or as tapestries, of those chip-like portraits and vignettes which are his basic vocabulary as a comic-strip author. The prospect of "private lives" appearing and reappearing out of their various warrens, and the thought of their respective routines being shredded and strained to be more connecting-wires, animated both his admiration and—hard upon that—his thin but whip-supple inventive resources.

Annie is heard, or seen, time and again, voting her preference for cities because "folks leave you alone"; and, on the other hand, skirting the advances of "snoops," benevolent or not, in small towns. (I suspect that Gray objected to small-town prying, first, because it was likely to succeed; and second, beyond even his obvious reverence for privacy—among his few unqualified venerations—he was aware that such success was futility itself, because, in his view, there is no "inner life" which the world will not, somehow or other, discover and invade. It means that there are no irreducible secrets, no personal holy-of-holies, which are not, in some way or other, on constant display; and, by his estimate of their general intelligence level, well beyond the perception of gossips.) Gray's 1931 adventure, which transported Annie and "Daddy" head-on into the Depression, has a range and unpredictability of incident which is not locked into the Nautilus chamber of Gray's accustomed plot architecture; a richness of both suspense and poignancy (both translated into Gray's familiar terms discussed above, only ingrained with more specific topical reference than usual); and a stream of cranky, picturesque figures—the original Maw Green, with her shrewd, stoic monkey-face, before Gray gave her the bottom-of-the-page Irish Wit and Wisdom concession; J.J. Shark, the financial bulldozer (Gray's declaration that, yes, there *are* evil capitalists, and more of a surprise, perhaps, to desultory, or Gray-hunting, readers); Old Jake, the straw-hatted and vested

Jewish merchant, arms folded as he stands beneath his awning; and best of all, perhaps, Flophouse Bill, "Daddy's" dwarfish guardian angel after he is blinded on the first day of his truck-driving job. Bill's stumpy figure scores a repeated, gritty impact which, like his fellow neo-Dickensians, is enriched by its action upon, and benefit from, the concrete-tenement street setting in which he is continually seen. "Daddy" himself is accorded one of the last humanly vulnerable appearances in which we will see him: destitute, betrayed by his fellow free-enterprisers led by Tom Bullion and J.J. Shark; slouched at the kitchen table of the flat he and Annie are sharing, worrying about his age. Here, the delicacy and gravid economy of Gray's drawing can give untoward poignancy to the forward droop of "Daddy's" bald head, and the way his arm lies upon the table, speaking his near-disintegration as a man in a single panel. The plainness of the room is oppressive; only in *The Bungle Family* have tables and chairs looked so unyielding—all combining to reduce the charade-like sense of Gray manipulating outsized "typical" situations, like those depicted in 1930s post-office murals.

On the other hand, the city scene itself seems to release, to lend a fermenting excitement to, Gray's compositions, which here feature a sense of sheerly gratuitous existence, at least as far as theatrical mechanics are concerned: The scene of "Daddy's" truck kissing an "El" upright, as he swerves to avoid a Breughel-like little kid stubbily chasing a ball, while peddlers and passers-by look on, moves gingerly toward the arena of action. The life in such a panel seems to cluster and rally rather than straggle toward the scene's peripherae, as in many of Gray's depictions.

Such an episode, which features some of Gray's most forceful and vivacious dramatization, also, I think, demonstrates his adherence to classical, melodramatic types and story-line, with a different application—lean and dogged, charged with his sense of, in Paul Goodman's naive-sounding but hard-to-match phrase, "How it is with him." Other artists would either opt for burlesque (Hershfield, Kahles, etc.) or, as would Gould, translate the cliches—those of situation, at least—into his own visual vocabulary of *things*: tools, machines, facilities, contraptions. For Gray, I suspect, cliches had a value and authority of their own, and he redeemed them with the *visual* authority which he brought to bear upon them. By that rearrangement of priorities with which the best painters and poets are familiar, he gave preferential place to *outlines*, which, in panel after panel, the theme of people's presences and ongoing histories are graven into their immediate and projected situations. This action of etching, of engraving, is exactly what cliche, in Gray's usage, performs. His style performs, not the conjuration of new stories, but the translation, and re-establishment, of old ones—an act of engineering which all-but-uniquely defines comic-strip style, I think.

There emanates from Gray's most characteristic work, as a result, a curious sort of spellbinding which actually gains force from the two-dimensionality of its terms, as presented with Gray's reticent intensity: the feeling, as with films of King Vidor, Ince, or Griffith, that we are rediscovering the actuality, in terms of singular immediacy, of these stock situations, which are being inscribed, as it were, before our eyes. Every gesture to the smallest—and Gray has conjugated a small vocabulary of tight, minuscule, emblematic actions: raised finger, flat-handed dismissal, a fist descending upon, rather than merely pounding, a desk—carries a sort of epic weight. The electricity extends to the simplest outlines, as well—the frizzes and elf-locks of Annie's hair, rising in terror or dismay; the *kris*-edge line which underscores key words.

The deployment of cliches also pertains, I think, to a dexterity that Gray, self-confessedly not overly sentimental, offers in "obligatory" sentimental moments, with no obvious curveballs—calendar excerpts like Thanksgiving dinner, Christmas, and New Year's, etc. What he communicates in these milestone events (milestones beneath which better artists have often been discovered pulverized, with Cherry Heering seeping from their veins) is, I feel, a purification of the sentiment that comes from respect, and which forms a kind of cement kiln for sentiment, for the ceremony itself, and for the hand-over-hand rope which all such observances provide for lives in which daily history more often that not seems an unending, and bottomless, crevass. The seasonal strips in which these rituals occur seem, somehow, more *earned* than many others, by virtue of the way Gray's stories, soap opera or dime-dreadful plots notwithstanding, manage to convey the sheer pressure and abrasive power of such aforementioned histories. He sees the sentiments attending them not as commodities to be delivered, but as gentle gods, requiring only proper, courteous genuflection. And we may never forget that, here as throughout most of his work, the word "obligatory" is Harold Gray's nearest synonym for "devout."

But in terms of any generous sentimental scale, of any imaginative nurturing by such sentiment, Gray offers only a series of thin, expertly placed, recorder-notes. In that weird armature of a relationship with Annie, "Daddy" Warbucks is permitted most of his human confusions, lapses, and resignations between 1924 and 1932· thereafter, he is often exposed to danger and proves most convincingly vulnerable to it; but never again does the strip reflect any considerable curiosity on Gray's part about "Daddy's" susceptibilities, the traceries of his sentimental self. Married to a hard-thrusting parvenu who "adopted" Annie as a passport to a Lady Bountiful status, "Daddy," with a bullet-shaped head (in obvious salutation of his name's still-fresh associations) also distinctly signaled our recollections of Jiggs, with his snub-nose, circlet eyes, and trap-mouth. On the death of Mrs. Warbucks (preceded by repentance; a rare dispensation from Gray) "Daddy" lets himself be towed off his usual astute course by a gold-digging fiancee named, if you please, Trixie Tinkle, who tries to dry-dock Annie with a cleaver-jawed harridan named Miss Treat, who commands a reformatory. For Gray, however, most such permutations of "Daddy's" human weakness were exhausted by the '30s midpoint; after which even the association with Annie becomes increasingly, and to the obvious relief of both, a partnership. Their dialogues (Annie giving out with: "Gee, 'Daddy', y' don't mean the law really can—") are increasingly socratic, increasingly serviceable to Gray's somewhat droning, somewhat grating, journalistic voice.

It seems to me that attempting to pose extrapolations at any length on the premise of a comic-strip author's "philosophy" likely leads one into the recurrent dilemma of Yosemite Sam in the Bugs Bunny cartoons, who discovers himself treading air, about a yard past the cliff-edge. I feel nostalgic for a parachute right now; but, grabbing for the nearest mountain goat's nose, I would add hastily that, to me, the general feeling conveyed by *Little Orphan Annie* is, of a world over which Harold Gray can imagine only the most limited control, by himself or anyone else. An island world, sure enough, fringed by thunderous breakers, with sea-monsters repeatedly observed beyond the five-mile limit. The tote-bag of driftwood attitudes which he and his Annie, and "Daddy," have shored up against the evil weathers is remote from any such hermetic fortress of reaction as he has been taxed for maintaining. The attitude which can be inferred from a comic-strip is the operative factor, or, none at all; and Gray's attitude, to any one-eyed reader using that

single eye with minimal discretion, comprises the most profound (and very far from smug) distrust of even the latitude of the law—not that of the legislature alone, but that of the cosmos encompassing it—which is the major stanchion of his faith. This law is embodied, for Harold Gray, in the ubiquitous line that boxes spatial relationships, delimits perspectives, and imbues every action, large and small, with its peculiar, dreamlike, and awful finality. But the function of that line and the law which it depicts, is of a retaining wall, or as the leanest sinew of faith imaginable. It is not anything that brings assurance and hopeful concoctions to his imagination. It represents the minimally reasonable means by which we are to go on, if we are to go on at all.

All such can return with undiminished formidable effect in alternate episodes: The Devil-as-fool is the Devil nonetheless. For, while Gray's deeply anti-Manichean soul cannot tolerate a presentation of absolute, undiscountenanced evil and would show all persons as subject to the pressures of experience, his didacticism holds that evil inheres in evil *attitudes*, which amount to folly, begetting fools and villains both; which one, at which moment, depending on the red-black eventualities of life. From the Waring blender of his theatrical zest, these factors emerge as a dexterously plied vaudeville, strengthened by something additional: the novelist's avidity for scouting out as many aspects of persons and events as possible. Thus, if the renegade banker, Mr. Mack (himself a resident of the Scots community of Bluebell, but suspiciously non-Caledonian in his slicked-back hair, spectacles, and van dyke beard), engages lawyers named Stein and Gold for his defense as bank robber, Gray will present us, at loving length, with old Jake, the benign Jewish shopkeeper, and Uncle Al, the trueblue pawnbroker. In 1935, a sequence about an ethics-flouting cobbler named George Chiselopolis is intercut with the Flag Day beatification of another immigrant, named Tony (whom I initially mistook for Curious George). In these instances, as in those cited above, the term "obligatory" is transmuted (as it was not when Dickens confected the Good Jew, Raiah, as palliative for Jewish protesters of Fagin) by Gray's own instinct for panorama and the sensation of a mural-like diversity which yet adheres to basic archetypes, or stereotypes; and his inclination to keep the reader off-balance as far as his, Gray's, predilections are concerned.

The actuality of the tabloid universe is as a Great Wall of China to *Little Orphan Annie*, casting its immense shadow in due course, after the trial years of the mid-'20s. The extraordinary moral/political/cultural avalanche of the '40s unloaded upon most popular artists in this country an unprecedented imagery. It was also an affront to many long-forged armors of the popular imagination, and hastened insensate bureaucratic hardness. All this was as nothing to Harold Gray save opportunity for enlarged latitude and increased encouragement to candor—for all such offered mere corroboration of views which had been in his strip for a very, very long time. The hideous world that Annie and "Daddy" always knew was so self-evident that Gray and Annie could not mask their benign disbelief, not untinted by amiable scorn, at those good and worthy people (usually given names like Fumble or Fuddle), who failed to reject its injunctions. Such a world merely assumed its sovereignty, struck its colors, more openly. An account from *Little Orphan Annie*'s highlights of the '40s alone reads like an endlessly unrolling scroll of atrocities; many of them, to be sure, directed against the heavies. A conniving banker literally springs himself out of jail, over the wall, only to be impaled on a Bengalese tiger trap fashioned by Punjab. In a grinding succession of all-black panels, a detail of Soviet agents, infiltrating "Daddy" Warbucks's fortress, are trapped by the automatic lock on his vault, and slowly suffocate. On still another Sunday page, a body of journalists is ushered by the doting, unwitting mother of a small-town-bred-psychopath into his "private zoo" (where he has been conducting amateur vivisection) and are shown staggering out, retching, against a background of bile green.

Gray's imagery of violence, his rhetorical economy of violence, demonstrate, throughout his career, a collaboration of mordant poetry, and an apprehension of "taste" that surely dwelt bone-deep in his relation to his work. It had to do with a respect for actuality itself, and for the distances that one's regard for actuality (occasionally known as "inhibitions") impose, and a hard, stringy humility, never entirely lacking in him at his sententious worst, regarding what is sheerly mysterious and uncontrollable, let alone unthinkable, in this world. Beside the factual horrors of Gray's universe, the productions of the comic-book coterie seem (more than ever, that is) the work of slickly misanthropic, flashy, essentially craven undergraduates. How strange to realize that he almost comes abreast, in this—his visual recognition of violence as a hole in the world, as a negative effect, the terrible removal of human presence, no matter how obnoxious—with those anti-violence advocates whom he devoutly despised.

Like Kipling, Gray saw the only refuge within the generally intolerable turbulences of this life, as an island of the elite: those who had access to the inner darkness of the universe, and, at the same time, were empowered to overskip the barriers of man-made law. One such clique is that of the outlaw elite, the managers who stand somewhere apart from the law, and who are blessed, not by their outlawry, but by the grace with which their admiration and affection for Annie carries to them. They are not above the Law—which must after all safeguard our sanity, since much else it cannot do—but, rather, within an enchanted circle. Racketeers like Nick Gatt, political bosses like Big August; Tom Take, the neighborly kleptomaniac of Cosmic City, with his smiling Mercury profile; Shanghai Peg, flinty-benign approximation of Long John Silver; and, incipiently of course, "Daddy" Warbucks, munitions manufacturer and lone wolf of finance. They, with "Daddy" at their center, are the curators of our fantasies, our hopes of power and justice and certainty beyond the Law's Versailles-maze of non-certainties, which, today, many of us yearn for if only in our lost power to envision them. Such imaginings, like Gray's sentimental interludes, are barricaded by the bleakness of his world-view, of which he has been the insistent mason all through Annie's career.

As a dancing Platonic shade of our responses to actuality and the central emblem of such, possibly Gray's closest approach to sheer elation is the white-whiskered Mr. Am: a neighbor of "Daddy" Warbucks, introduced in 1935, who, Daddy confided to Annie, was reputed to have lived "thousands of years"; who chucklingly acknowledged in a most spectacular courtroom interview, that he had sold sword and shield to Alexander the Great, and been *intime* with Aristotle, Plato, and Socrates "the wise-cracking syndicated columnists of their day." Mr. Am's very special guest appearance on earth could only have been sustained for its short duration by the near-manic (beneath its midwestern poker-pan) mixture of gravity and audacity which was Harold Gray's. So, too, his sense of drawing as a ritual of invocation and conjuration: like all such mystical acts, sufficient unto itself for the adhesive qualities it achieves, from this day to the next; of whatever intelligibility we can salvage from life. In the drawings discussed above, as in all his work, Harold Gray says in effect: "What would you have of me, who must sweat out the same world as you? To permit myself, and you, the false hope of some vision in which the law of this world is loving partner with justice, would be more than a false hope; it would blaspheme against the actuality of my work which is the imprint of God's handiwork, from pillar to cornice. I can, however, offer you, and myself, a little of that magic which builds a small provisional bridge, a formula which offers a fresh look at how-things-are, such as has always consoled, in this world, the poor in spirit."

For all the contrary reasons which come trouping daily before me, I must nurse my regret that they, the domesticators and elegiasts, could not have let Little Orphan Annie withdraw, along with her creator, into her taciturn, eccentric legend. For he died after setting forth the ultimate homecoming, Annie's entry into her particular Promised Land: an antebellum-style Southern mansion, presided over by a naive, serene, grandmotherly mistress, discreetly and peripherally menaced by two white-trash scoundrels named Tar (a chiselling lawyer) and Knuks (superintendent of a prison farm, slightly recast from the Arkansas death-camp of then-recent headlines). The mansion was staffed with liveried servants, tinted the most discreet of pinks for the Sunday page, who deferred to "Miz' Annie" at every point. What a closing act for the opera which Brecht and Weill never made!

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Harold Gray, Cartoonist and Mythologist

Annie's Real "Daddy"

By Harry McCracken

The great geniuses of the comic strip were best appreciated by relatively few truly devoted comic strip fans. Some—Caniff, Capp, and Kelly—were relished not only by the buffs, but by comics readers in general; others were beloved by the strip devotees, but largely ignored by everybody else. George Herriman, of course, was the leading light of this group, and Jack Kent is another good example.

All this may seem to be axiomatic, but in Harold Gray we have the exception to the rule. The comics-reading public kept his strip—*Little Orphan Annie*, as if anybody needed to be told—near the top of popularity polls for most of the 44 years he did it; still, it is hard to find anything favorable written about the strip in the years prior to Gray's death in 1968. For while *Little Orphan Annie's* characters, catch phrases, and even its graphic conventions long ago entered the national consciousness, it is only in recent years that it has come to be regarded by many as not only one of the most popular strips of all time but one of the best.

The strip may have not been appreciated in years past, but it was never ignored. Indeed, *Little Orphan Annie* was an extraordinarily controversial comic strip, and no other strip has yet sparked the sustained virulence that it did. Most of the complaint about the strip centered on Gray's editorializing through the strip; he commented not just on political matters but on nearly every area of American life, and because his views were generally of the right-wing variety, his strip was for decades prime grist for the mills of such magazines as *The New Republic*. In retrospect, Gray's use of the comic strip as soapbox can be seen to have been both pioneering and as yet unmatched; *Little Orphan Annie* was a comic strip with a theme—the value of hard work and independence—and almost all of Gray's editorializing in the strip reinforced this theme.

At least as interesting as Gray's message was the way in which he delivered it. *Little Orphan Annie*, despite tempests it stirred up, was regarded as a simplistic, sentimental melodrama for the kiddies, but it was anything but that. Gray was intent on getting his ideas across, and he used a painstakingly constructed narrative form to do it, which is not to say that the strip was a merely didactic work, for Gray's hard work and planning made the strip often absorbing in its own right. His understanding of the possibilities of his medium was tremendous and apparently instinctive; his stories were designed to wring every bit of drama out of the events, while maintaining a high level of suspense. As Paul Gallico—another master storyteller—wrote, "Personally, I never miss reading Annie. I sweat, I suffer, I get sore, I rejoice."

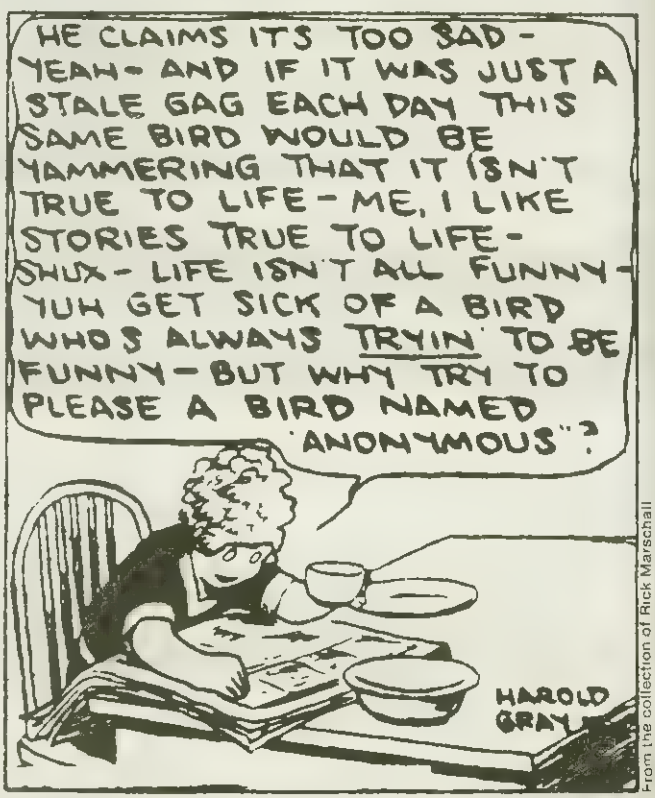
Harold Lincoln Gray was, like his strip, an original, yet decidedly of the American heartland in vision and values. The history of *Little Orphan Annie* is the story of his life, for he was devoted to the strip and spent most of his time working on it, in one way or another: If he wasn't writing or drawing, he was out researching the people and places of the strip. He had once wanted to be a reporter, and in a real sense he was one—"My business," he said, "is to keep in contact with what the people are thinking."

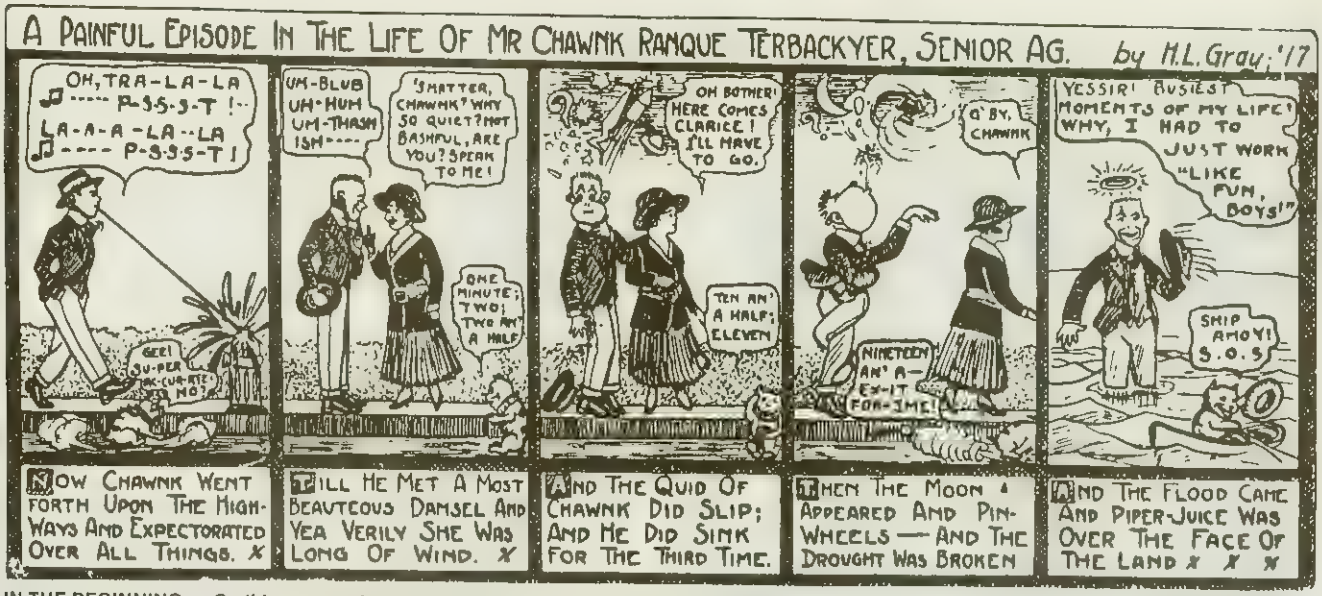
He was born on January 20th, 1894, on his parents' farm at Kankakee, Illinois; a good time and area for a cartoonist of his sort to be born. Details of his early life remain obscure, for he was to give few interviews, and when he did, preferred to speak about his work rather than himself. We know that the cartooning bug began, not surprisingly, early on, as an attempt to relieve the boredom and strain of a farm boyhood.

By 1913, the already enterprising Gray was drawing editorial cartoons to order for farm journals and the Lafayette, Indiana *Morning-Journal*. He was also, as of that year, a college man, attending Purdue University because of its proximity to the Gray farm; he paid his way through college by digging ditches, which paid better than cartooning. The Purdue yearbook, the *Debris*, became an outlet for his artistic urge, and he filled the four editions of it during his college years with cartoons drawn in a lively, generic style which gave few clues of the distinctive one he would develop. (The characters of these early cartoons are among the very few in the Gray world to be blessed with normal, pupiled eyes.)

After graduation in 1917, Gray set off to Chicago to make his mark as a cartoonist; his first move, sensibly enough, was to call on John T. McCutcheon, the Chicago *Tribune*'s famous cartoonist, friend to young cartoonists, and a fellow Purdue man. (It was in the pages of the *Debris*, as a matter of fact, that McCutcheon had begun his distinguished collaboration with George Ade.) The legendary editorial and panel cartoonist was kind enough to provide the young Gray, who would remain a good friend, with a letter of introduction to the *Tribune*'s art editor. There weren't any art department jobs available, though, so Gray was made a cub reporter, the beginning of a nearly unbroken half-century association with the paper and its syndicate.

Any possibility of a brilliant career in straight journalism was ended 10 days later when room opened up for Gray in the art


HE CLAIMS ITS TOO SAD - YEAH - AND IF IT WAS JUST A STALE GAG EACH DAY THIS SAME BIRD WOULD BE YAMMERING THAT IT ISN'T TRUE TO LIFE - ME, I LIKE STORIES TRUE TO LIFE - SHUX - LIFE ISN'T ALL FUNNY - YUH GET SICK OF A BIRD WHO'S ALWAYS TRYIN' TO BE FUNNY - BUT WHY TRY TO PLEASE A BIRD NAMED "ANONYMOUS"?
HAROLD GRAY
From the collection of Rick Marschall


A PAINFUL EPISODE IN THE LIFE OF MR CHAWNK RANQUE TERBACKYER, SENIOR AG. by H.L.Gray;'17
OH, TRA-LA-LA ----- P-S-S-S-T !-- LA-A-A-LA--LA ----- P-S-S-S-T !
GEE! SU-PER-DUPER-CUR-RATE NO?
UM-BLUB UH-HUM UM-THASM ISH----
'SMATTER, CHAWNK? WHY SO QUIET? NOT BASHFUL, ARE YOU? SPEAK TO ME!
ONE MINUTE; TWO; TWO AN' A HALF
OH BOTHER! HERE COMES CLARICE! I'LL HAVE TO GO.
TEN AN' A HALF; ELEVEN
O' BY, CHAWNK
NINETEEN AN' A— EX-IT FOR-1ME!
YESSIR! BUSIEST MOMENTS OF MY LIFE! WHY, I HAD TO JUST WORK "LIKE FUN, BOYS!"
SHIP AHOY! S.O.S
NOW CHAWNK WENT FORTH UPON THE HIGH-WAYS AND EXPECTORATED OVER ALL THINGS.
TILL HE MET A MOST BEAUTEOUS DAMSEL AND YEA VERILY SHE WAS LONG OF WIND.
AND THE QUID OF CHAWNK DID SLIP; AND HE DID SINK FOR THE THIRD TIME.
THEN THE MOON APPEARED AND PIN-WHEELS — AND THE DROUGHT WAS BROKEN
AND THE FLOOD CAME AND PIPER-JUICE WAS OVER THE FACE OF THE LAND

Mugar Library, Boston University

IN THE BEGINNING — On this page and next are drawings from Harold Gray's college yearbook at Purdue. While there is little foreshadowing of his later style, there is much evidence of a devotion to the pen.

department, where he worked as an art handyman. This job was soon interrupted for six months in the Army as a bayonet instructor, and came to an end in 1920. After a brief career as a commercial artist, painting puzzle-book covers and the like, Gray went to work for Sidney Smith, creator of the increasingly popular *The Gumps*. Gray worked on a short-lived series of *Gumps* animated cartoons, and eventually became letterer and background assistant on the strip, hardly positions of major creative importance. Still, the privilege of presence at the continuing creation of the pioneering story strip was, as Gray was to remember it, "the finest training any apprentice cartoonist could dream of." (It was at the Smith studio that he met Stanley Link, who was to become a lifelong friend.)

About the time that Sidney Smith signed the first million-dollar contract in his profession in 1922, Gray, understandably eager to leave apprenticeship, began to regularly submit concepts for new strips to Captain Joseph Medill Patterson, who, with his cousin Colonel Robert McCormick, owned the Chicago *Tribune* and the New York *News*. Just as regularly, Patterson, the man who contributed so much to the success of such favorites as *Moon Mullins*, *Gasoline Alley*, and *The Gumps* itself, turned down his ideas. But in early 1924, Patterson was looking for new strips for an early morning edition of his young paper, the New York *Daily News*, and he decided to take a chance on the concept of Gray's that was to become *Little Orphan Annie*.

Like the birth of that other eternally youthful child of the 1920s, Mickey Mouse, the birth of Little Orphan Annie is shrouded in myth. There is with Annie, as with Mickey, a memorable story attached to the events, but whether it is based in fact we cannot say. That story, of course, has Gray coming up with a strip about an orphan *boy*, perhaps named "Little Orphan Otto." (A 1924 *Tribune* ad—perhaps the earliest printed account of the strip's inception—credits Sidney Smith with conceiving the idea of a strip about an orphan boy, but one can imagine why the syndicate would want to tie a new strip with the hottest cartoonist in the business.) Patterson, the story continues, liked Gray's sketches, and approved the idea with one rather major change: "the kid looks like a pansy, Gray. Put skirts on him and we'll call him Little Orphan Annie."

And that may well be how it happened, although Gray, after Patterson's death, told an entirely different story that left the good Captain out altogether. In any event, the idea was a sound one. As Gray was fond of pointing out, in 1924 there were dozens of strips about boys, but one about a girl was a novelty (the success of *Little Orphan Annie* would change that). Furthermore, the orphan angle would allow great flexibility in storylines, for the new strip was going to be, like *The Gumps*, a story strip. And importantly, the title—lifted from James Whitcomb Riley's beloved poem "Little Orphant Annie"—would assure the young strip a built-in audience, although Gray's orphan had little else in common with Riley's. (Orphant Annie had, by the way, stepped out of Riley's poem already, when Johnny Gruelle published his *Orphant Annie Storybook*, a collection of fairy tales as told by Riley's gamin.)

Gray took his sketches, Patterson's suggestions, and the new title and its implications, and went to work; and on August 5, 1924, in the pages of that early edition of the *Daily News*, *Little Orphan Annie* made its first appearance before a paying audience. The strip was initially a hodgepodge of disparate influences. Gray, still assisting on *The Gumps*, brought much of that strip to his; they were both lightly humorous story strips. Another prime influence was the popularity of Mary Pickford's films; the storyline of Gray's strip, chronicling Annie's trip from the orphanage to the mansion of the rich phony Mrs. Warbucks (the penchant for punned names had already begun), and Annie's corkscrew curls and general appearance, were obviously lifted from the Pickford movies. A third influence became clear a few weeks into the strip when Gray introduced Mrs. Warbucks' husband Oliver—soon to be called "Daddy"—who looked, talked, and behaved much like another rich man of the comics, George McManus's Jiggs. (The blankness of Gray's characters' eyes has been commented upon for decades; how many have noticed that Maggie and Jiggs are identically afflicted?)

One aspect of the strip from the start was uniquely Gray's; the day-for-day storytelling. Each day's strip covered one day in Annie's life, providing a sort of realism that no other strip had. This technique of Gray's—whether it was conscious innovation, we'll never know—was not of much importance in the earliest days, when the strip relied heavily on gags; as the strip's storyline grew in importance, it would become increasingly significant.

Shortly after "Daddy" Warbucks entered the strip, he, along with his wife and their wealth, suddenly disappeared from the storyline. According to a 1935 article on Gray and his strip, this was on Captain Patterson's insistence; he figured more readers would identify with a poor orphan than a rich one. The argument between Gray and Patterson over the strip's direction would come to a head in late 1925, as we shall see, but for now, Annie stayed with a series of poor guardians, and the pathos level of the strip became high, as suggested by an early syndicate ad for the strip: "*Little Orphan Annie* is a different kind of comic strip. It isn't all comedy. In fact the basis of the strip is the tragedy of a homeless, misused, unlucky waif of the asylum who cheerfully encounters her daily adventure and provided many a laugh at the end."

The strip was actually better than that makes it sound, for Gray's improvement as he gained his footing was noticeable almost from day to day. The humor level remained high, but it

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became well integrated into the storyline. Gray's stories, at first short and formless, became increasingly long and inventive, and he introduced new characters such as the Silos, a farming couple who were the most durable of Annie's guardians other than Warbucks. An even more important character was introduced in January, 1925, when Annie rescued a pup from some bullies; he turned out to be Sandy, who grew up, stuck around, and became the sounding-board for Annie's already frequent soliloquies. (Sandy was only the most noteworthy of many animal characters Gray would introduce into the strip over the years; early on, the strip was full of cute animal pals for Annie, and in later, less humorous days, Gray favored animals as comic relief. He also intentionally introduced occasional sympathetic cats into the strip, in a day when there were considerably fewer of them in the comics than there are today; cat fanciers wrote to thank him for the favor. Gray himself, incidentally, owned a cat named Loa, for the initials of his strip.)

Little Orphan Annie was, by all indications a success from the start; it survived, first of all, the early demise of the *Daily News* edition it was in, reappearing in both the main *Daily News* edition and the Chicago *Tribune*, and by November, 1924, it was offered for syndication. The Sunday page was initiated on November 2, 1924; at first, it was a not-particularly-funny gag page outside of the weekday continuity.

The greatest indication of how popular the strip had become occurred on October 25, 1925, when *Little Orphan Annie* was missing from the pages of the *Tribune*. This was, reportedly, a punitive action on Captain Patterson's part, for Gray had reintroduced "Daddy" Warbucks into the strip. In any event, Annie's absence brough a surging sea of letters, telegrams, and, legend has it, bomb threats, to the Tribune Tower, and not only was *Little Orphan Annie* back the next day, but the *Tribune*, knowing a good thing when it saw it, devoted a large amount of space over several days to reprinting letters about the strip's disappearance, and solicited more letters on the matter of whether Annie should stay with Warbucks or her farm friends the Silos. The mail was about evenly divided, and both sets of guardians stayed in the strip's cast.

The public's ringing endorsement of Gray's strip must have been exhilarating to him, but his mind was soon on other things when his young wife Doris died on November 25, after many months of illness. Gray remarried in 1929 to Winifred Frost of Chicago.

Throughout the 1920s, Gray's work developed and matured; the strip's art, at first not much better than Gray s *Debris* cartoons, became somber and effective. Gray's stories often were developed around the general framework of having Annie and Sandy enter a town or city and encounter the colorful citizens thereof, the countless kindly folks, the evil landlords, and the good and bad young people. Their names almost always defined their character; Mr. and Mrs. Futile were a poverty-stricken couple, and Mr. Pinchpenny their heartless landlord. (Despite the improbability of most of Gray's character's names, he was able to maintain a file of letters from people who shared names with his characters; some were delighted, others threatened lawsuits or worse. Gray himself didn't fit his system, interestingly enough; he dealt almost exclusively in black-and-white!) Gray delighted in creating these cities and their characters, and bouncing Annie off them; he took to inventing lengthy family trees for some of these characters, and designing floor plans for their houses as part of his planning of stories. The strip became a Bunyanesque narrative, with each character representative of some good or evil quality, resulting in interplay. Gray was also editorializing in other ways, commenting on, among the other things, racial and religious tolerance and updated farming methods. (He was in favor of all three.)

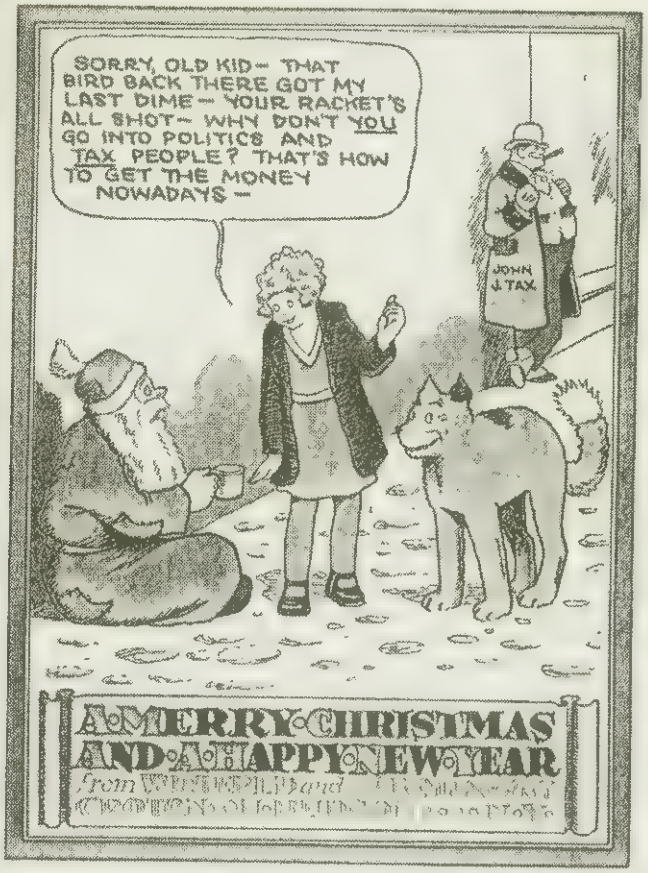
Gray kept a monthly record of his strip's popularity in relation to the other Tribune-News syndicate strips; by the very early 1930s, *Little Orphan Annie* had become the most profitable strip in the syndicate's stable. (*The Gumps* was still the circulation leader, but Gray's strip far outweighed it in merchandising, more than making up the difference in profits.) In 1930, Gray and his wife switched bases, moving to New York and a sizable home that befitted one of the most successful cartoonists in the country. *Little Orphan Annie* was enormously popular, but its greatest heights of success, as well as the first of the controversies it would create, were to come later in the decade.

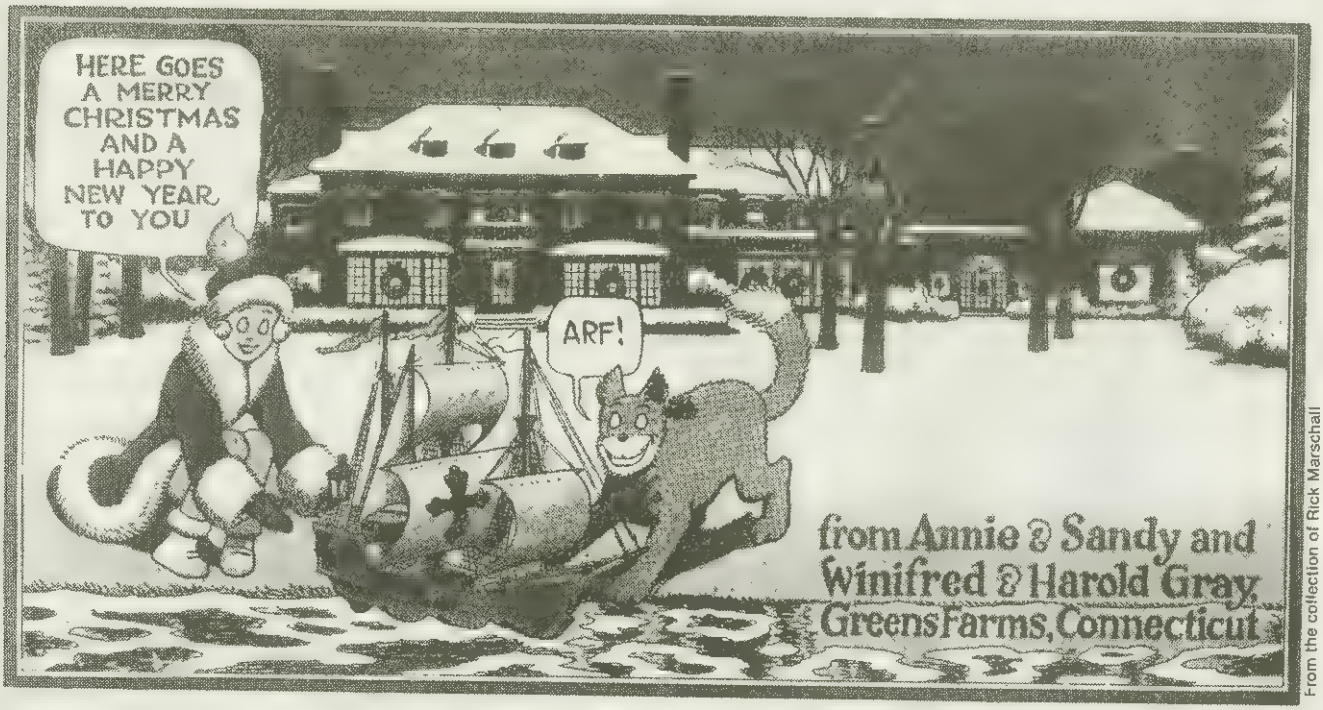
One boost to the strip's readership that cannot be overestimated was the onset of the Great Depression. Despite the pressure of "Daddy" Warbucks, *Little Orphan Annie*'s cast was made up mostly of decent poor people struggling to make good, and Gray did not have to tailor his storylines to the onset of hard times to strive for relevance. The strip's philosophy —that hard work and independence result in, and are in themselves, the most satisfying forms of success—owed more to Theodore Roosevelt than Franklin Roosevelt, but it found a receptive audience that grew more even more so as the Depression went on (by 1937, according to one poll, it was the most popular strip in the country).

The spin-offs from the strip were numerous; books of all sorts, beginning with a series of Cupples & Leon reprint books in the '20s, and progressing to the endless series of Big Little Books and similar volumes that every popular strip inspired in the '30s. (The most interesting *Little Orphan Annie* book was *My Folks—by Little Orphan Annie as Told to Winifred Gray*, published by Whitman in 1930. Despite the byline, it is likely that Harold Gray's hand was the dominant one in the writing of the book's text, which provided an origin of sorts for Annie; he did provide the illustrations, which remain among the best examples of his art.)

The major offspring of the strip in these years was the Little Orphan Annie radio show, which began in 1930 and was for a time the most popular daytime show on the air. A detailed analysis of the program falls outside this article's domain; the show was never terribly faithful to the strip and grew less so as years passed. Gray himself had little to do with the radio exploits of his heroine other than providing some of the art for the many pieces of merchandise inspired by the program, and receiving a healthy cut of the show's sizable profits. Gray was always interested in merchandising his creations, and during the '50s, when the strip inspired few products, he worked to have a new Annie song written and a line of dolls based on the strip made. His interest in the strip's promotion was genuine but quirky; when *Collier's* magazine requested that he contribute a two-page feature on the strip's history, he wrote them a lengthy and amusing letter mocking the fee they offered him and explaining that the appearance of his characters in their magazine would do more for *Collier's* circulation than his strip's.

The strip also inspired two live-action movies in the '30s, both forgettable and not very faithful to Gray's work; those and the radio show were the only major adaptations of the strip into other media until the Broadway play of the '70s and its movie version (another film had been planned in the mid-'60s, with


SORRY, OLD KID— THAT BIRD BACK THERE GOT MY LAST DIME— YOUR RACKET'S ALL SHOT— WHY DON'T YOU GO INTO POLITICS AND TAX PEOPLE? THAT'S HOW TO GET THE MONEY NOWADAYS—
JOHN J. TAX
A MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR


HERE GOES A MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR TO YOU
ARF!
from Annie & Sandy and Winifred & Harold Gray
Greens Farms, Connecticut

From the collection of Rick Marschall

'TIS THE SEASON . . — Harold Gray was always very responsive to fan reaction. Many who wrote fan letters were put on Gray's Christmas card list, receiving each year beautiful, full-color greetings.

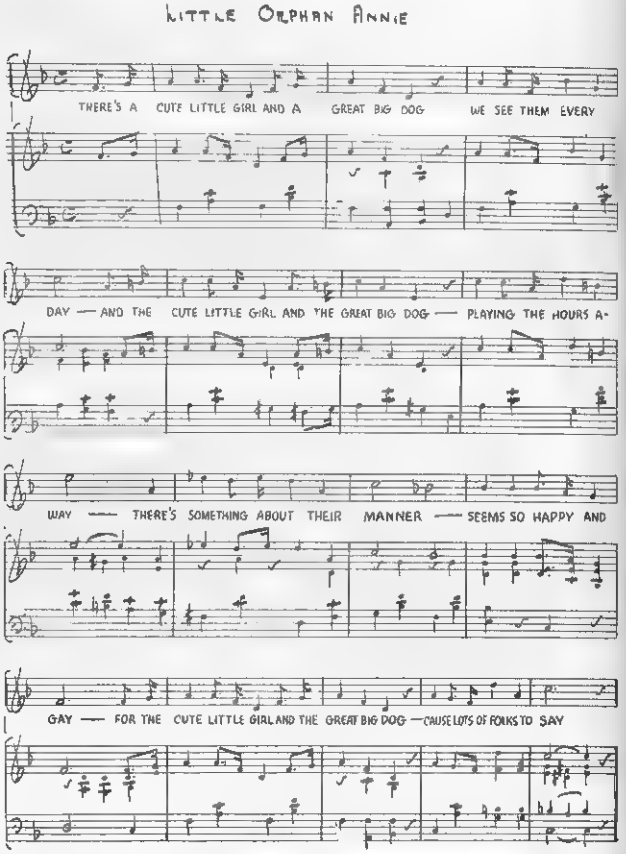
Gray's grudging cooperation, but it was never made). Suffice it to say that a really faithful adaptation of the strip has yet to be made, although the director of the upcoming "Annie II" has said it will be based closely on the strip.

The first half of the '30s saw Gray's workload increase, for it was in these years that he begun to work on the three features besides *Little Orphan Annie* that he was responsible for. The first of these was the strip that served as *Little Orphan Annie*'s Sunday companion during 1931 and 1932: "Private Life of a ...", each episode titled "Private Life of a Kettle" or "Private Life of a Rolling Stone", etc. As those two examples suggest, the feature was about a different inanimate object each week; the subject of each episode provided word-balloon commentary on its lot in life, which was always made to seem the most exciting thing in the world. It was a highly original and delightful feature, quite unlike anything else Gray ever did. Not surprisingly, though, the idea wore itself out, and the strip was replaced on Jan. 1, 1933, by *Maw Green*, a strip featuring the feisty old Irishwoman who had earlier been a character in *Little Orphan Annie*. It began as a story strip which in some ways harked back to the earliest *Little Orphan Annie* stips, for Maw was in the early episodes rich but rough-hewn, a lot like the early Warbucks. *Maw Green* later became a sardonic gag strip, in which Gray's editorializing was far blunter than it usually was in *Annie*. It was one of the longest lived of the Sunday-companion strips, and indeed outlived Gray, being continued by his immediate successors.

The third of Gray's non-*Orphan Annie* strips is the most mysterious and most tantalizing. *Little Joe* was a Sunday strip begun on October 1, 1933, by Ed Leffingwell, Gray's assistant on *Orphan Annie* and cousin (their mothers were twin sisters). Gray appears to have guided the strips writing from the start, and by 1936 he was clearly doing most of the strip's writing and drawing, as he would well into the 1940s. The feature, about a young boy in the modern West, usually featured short, light continuities; it was never as complex a work as Gray's major strip, but always interesting and well-done. After the mid-'40s, Gray had less to do with *Little Joe;* Ed Leffinwell had passed away, and the strip was taken over by his brother Robert, also Gray's assistant and secretary. It became a rather eccentric gag strip, and went on, in fewer and fewer papers, into the late '60s, along with its companion strip *Ze' Gen'ral*, a feature identical to *Maw Green* in format and gag style. (One suspects that the cousins came up with jokes for each other's gag strips, or one of them wrote with the gags for both strips, for the strips' ideas were nearly always interchangeable.)

That Harold Gray did not care for personal glory is most evident in the strange case of *Little Joe;* what other top cartoonist would ghost a minor strip at the height of his fame? Gray was simply a man who loved what he did, and presumably he took on *Little Joe* because one strip didn't take up all his time. Furthermore, Gray's assistants appear never to have done more than *LOA*'s lettering and some background art; Gray pencilled and inked all the main characters, even when his hand got shaky in later years. Even more than the art, the strip's storyline and dialogue was purely Gray's own. *Little Orphan Annie was* Harold Gray, a fact that became abundantly clear when his successors tried to duplicate his work and disastrously failed. (Leonard Starr has succeeded with the strip where others couldn't in large part because he has *not* imitated Gray's writing and drawing styles to a great degree.)

The strip, which had begun, as Gray would admit, as an imitation of movie and film melodramas, had by 1934 become very much a reflection of Gray's mind, and it was in that year that the strip was first attacked for its political commentary. Gray had earlier been hesitant about editorializing; in a surprisingly candid syndicate publicity sheet of the early '30s, he had explained why. "It's impossible even to mention topics of the day, or religious and social matters without a great hue and cry being raised at once. Usually a cartoonist has to keep on the

COLLECTOR'S ITEM — One of radio's most popular shows in the '30s and '40s was *Little Orphan Annie*, mirroring the phenomenal success in newspaper, Big Little Books, merchandising. BELOW is the songsheet of the very famous theme song from the Ovaltine show.

LITTLE ORPHAN ANNIE
THERE'S A CUTE LITTLE GIRL AND A GREAT BIG DOG WE SEE THEM EVERY
DAY — AND THE CUTE LITTLE GIRL AND THE GREAT BIG DOG — PLAYING THE HOURS A-
WAY — THERE'S SOMETHING ABOUT THEIR MANNER — SEEMS SO HAPPY AND
GAY — FOR THE CUTE LITTLE GIRL AND THE GREAT BIG DOG — CAUSE LOTS OF FOLKS TO SAY

From the collection of Rick Marschall

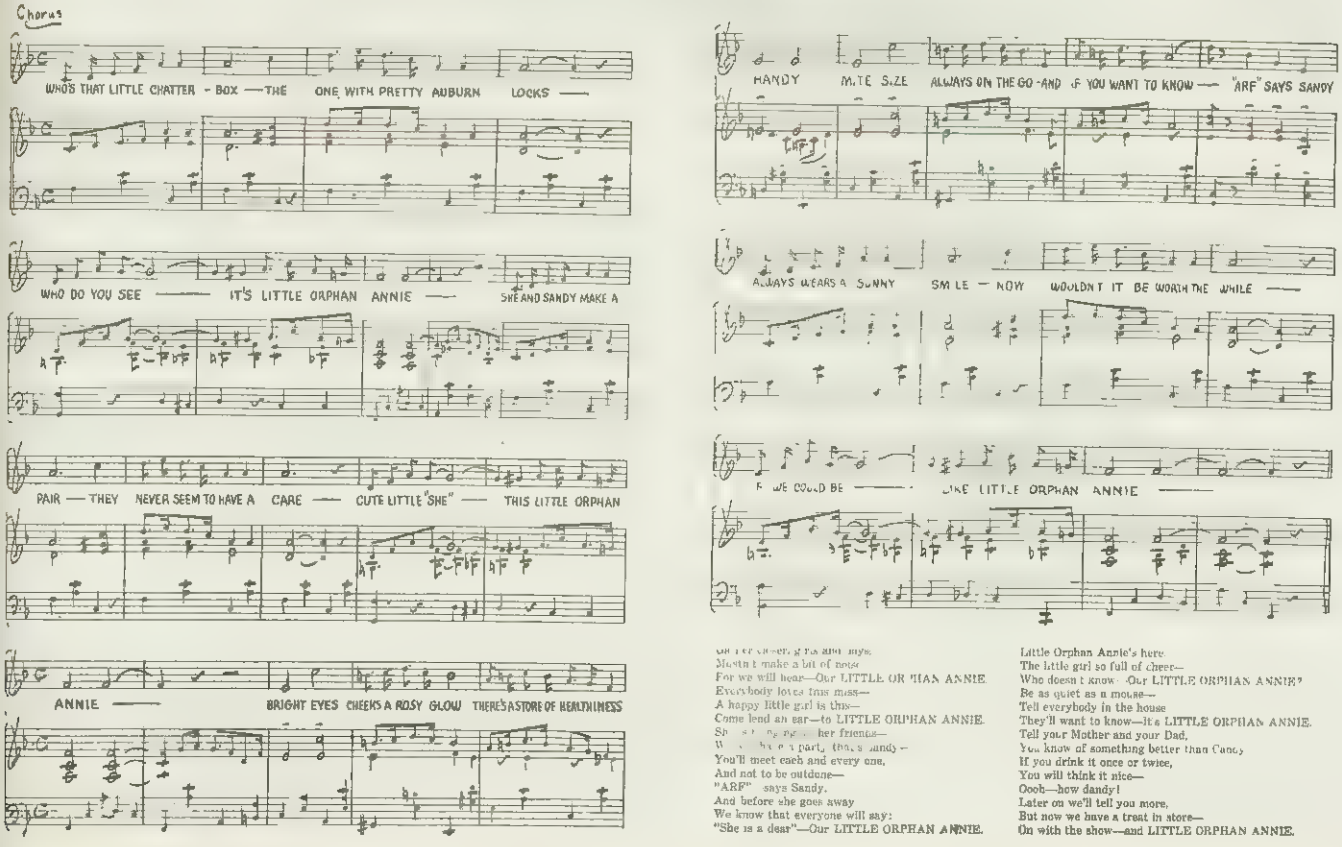
fence in all matters. He is to talk a lot, but never say anything. . . And (Annie) must never mention farm relief nor chain stores, nor any questions like those in which many newpaper readers are interested. There are too many hot tempered individuals on either side of the matters." Gray went on to complain about the syndicate's code which even forbid snakes, rats, mice and men catching their whiskers in flypaper, but it's clear that he was more upset about not being able to mention farm relief than flypaper; consequently, he began to ignore the possible repercussions and ediorialize on matters that might cause a stir. In mid-1934, he put "Daddy" Warbucks in jail on a tax-evasion charge manufactured by Phil O. Bluster, the demagogue District Attorney. The sequence was clearly a comment on the case of Samuel Insull, the Midwestern utility magnate who left the country when his empire collapsed; "Because a few men have gained riches by crooked dealing," lamented Warbucks, "Bluster and his kind scream that all men are dishonest rascals."

Richard L. Neuberger, an Oregon journalist who would become a U.S. Senator, holds the distinction of being the first writer to attack Gray's use of his strip as a soapbox, in a piece published in the July 11, 1934 *New Republic*. Neuberger, who was actually more temperate than many Gray critics to come, saw the story as a defense of Insull; in retrospect, though, it seems at least as likely that Gray meant it as a defense of honest wealthy men against the likes of Insull. In any event, Neuberger's piece was typical of anti-Gray articles to come in several respects. He assumed, first of all, that Patterson and McCormick, wealthy Republicans that they were, were controlling the storyline. This however, was not the case; when the syndicate pressured Gray on the strip's political content, it was invariably to tone it down in fear of losing client papers. And like most of Gray's critics, Neuberger complained not just about the slant of Gray's editorializing, but simply that the strip had any political content at all. Neuberger, like others, mistakenly thought the strip's audience to be made up mostly of children; this may be one reason why *Little Orphan Annie* was attacked for commenting on current affairs at all, when later strips—*Pogo*, *Li'l Abner*, and *Doonesbury*, to name the most prominent ones—were criticized for *what* they said, rather than that they engaged in commentary. A second reason, of course, is that Gray's opinions—most of them, anyway—were intensely right-wing, unlike most other soapbox strips. (Al Capp editorialized for years without trouble, but when his commentary took on a conservative slant in the 1960s, the critics were suddenly all over him. Percy Crosby, who with *Skippy* expressed a viewpoint similar to Gray's, somehow got off mostly unscathed by the press, though he got into trouble in other ways.)

But the primary reason why Gray was under fire for more than 30 years for his editorializing where others were not was that his was a different kind. *Little Orphan Annie* was a serious strip, unlike the other major social-commentary strips, and Gray made his point against what he saw as social evils by having his characters suffer because of them. In 1935, in an anti-union story that prompted numerous editorials and at least one suspension of the strip, Gray killed off a particularly lovable character, the lovable little inventor Eli Eon, at the hands of workers stirred into a frenzy by evil union-leaders. Gray's commentary was potent and serious in a way that other strips was not and the critics—who often mocked Gray for using a *comic strip* for his soapbox—took it very seriously indeed.

In the mid-'30s, the strip was changing in other ways besides the increased dose of commentary. Warbucks had gone from the henpecked, modestly rich man of the mid-'20 to the richest man in the world; he acquired the services of Punjab and the Asp, both of whom had magical powers that were mysteriously and generally used off-stage. Gray's use of his day-for-day narrative device became even more useful; many of the most interesting events in the strip happened off-stage in between strips, resulting in an even more forbidding tone than previously.

And more and more, Gray was experimenting with different kinds of stories. The small-town adventures of Annie and Sandy remained a staple, but now there were globe-spanning stories too, with villains considerably more threatening than an impatient landlord. Other stories were old-fashioned murder mys-


Chorus
WHO'S THAT LITTLE CHATTER - BOX — THE ONE WITH PRETTY AUBURN LOCKS —
WHO DO YOU SEE — IT'S LITTLE ORPHAN ANNIE — SHE AND SANDY MAKE A
PAIR — THEY NEVER SEEM TO HAVE A CARE — CUTE LITTLE "SHE" — THIS LITTLE ORPHAN
ANNIE — BRIGHT EYES CHEEKS A ROSY GLOW THERE'S A STORE OF HEALTHINESS
HANDY MITE SIZE ALWAYS ON THE GO - AND IF YOU WANT TO KNOW — "ARF" SAYS SANDY
ALWAYS WEARS A SUNNY SMILE — NOW WOULDN'T IT BE WORTH THE WHILE —
IF WE COULD BE — LIKE LITTLE ORPHAN ANNIE —
Little Orphan Annie's here
The little girl so full of cheer—
Who doesn't know Our LITTLE ORPHAN ANNIE?
Be as quiet as a mouse—
Tell everybody in the house
They'll want to know—It's LITTLE ORPHAN ANNIE.
Tell your Mother and your Dad,
You know of something better than Candy
If you drink it once or twice,
You will think it nice—
Oooh—how dandy!
Later on we'll tell you more,
But now we have a treat in store—
On with the show—and LITTLE ORPHAN ANNIE.

Mugar Library, Boston University

L'ENVOI — The original version of Harold Gray's last Sunday page. The writing, though disjointed, seems to be his, and the artwork may have been touched up by Gray's assistant and nephew, Bob Leffingwell.

teries, and Gray built several continuities around playful ghosts. The strip was tied together not by story subject but by Gray's highly individualistic storytelling and art.

That art, by the mid 1930s had become as much a contributor to the strip's power as the story and dialogue. The characters were almost all barrel-chested colossuses, whether male or female, who spent most of their time standing still and pondering past events. This gave the strip a muted almost static appearance that was the visual equivalent of Gray's dialogue, and entirely appropriate. (The lack of action functioned well, but it undoubtedly had its origins in the fact that Gray was never able to satisfactorily draw action scenes; indeed, seemed unable throughout his 44 years on the strip to draw a convincing running figure.) Gray was a limited artist, to be sure, but he was not an unsuccessful realist; he knew what he wanted, and worked until he got it. His pencil sketches, thick with re-positioned lines, show the hard work he put into his drawing even more than the inked art.

As World War II gripped the nation, Gray's syndicate ran an *Editor & Publisher* ad that plastered a smiling Orphan Annie in front of war-related headlines, and asked the question, "In Jittery Days of screaming headlines . . . of sacrifice and glory what is more soothing and relaxing than a sentimental journey with Little Orphan Annie!" Despite that ad, Gray, like practically every cartoonist, devoted much space to the war effort, but as always in his own way. "Daddy" Warbucks, Punjab and the Asp went off to war but not for the U.S. government, which "Daddy"—and, presumably, Harold Gray—thought had taken too long to get into the thick of things. (An opinion which proved that Gray did not toe the typically conservative line on all matters.)

Gray made a genuine contribution to the homefront effort with the creation of the Junior Commandoes, a scrap-collecting group headed by "Colonel" Annie which included thousands of flesh-and-blood youngsters, sponsored by papers that carried *Little Orphan Annie*. It was a shrewd move on Gray's part, and one time he received little heat for injecting social messages into his comic strip.

Still, Gray called them as he saw them, and in 1943 he devoted several days' strips to an abusive gas-rationing official one Fred Flask; this brought complaints naturally enough that he was undermining the war effort. And in Gray's home state of Connecticut, the controversy was more complicated for Gray had applied to the head of the local rationing board for more gasoline and been turned down, and its official was named Robert Flack. Gray stoutly denied that he had any ulterior motives in the sequence; perhaps so. Few men other than Harold Gray though, could be concurrently praised for their contributions to the war effort and attacked for hurting it, but he managed it.

Another event that displayed the contradictory facets of Gray's personality came when, in 1942 he featured a successful Junior Commando who happened to be black. Gray had always used relatively unstereotyped Blacks, Orientals, and miscellaneous ethnic types in the strip, and some of his earliest soapboxing had been in favor of understanding between different sorts of people. In 1942 the use of blacks in the comics was still controversial enough that Gray received a complaining letter from the publisher of a Southern paper about the introduction of a Black Junior Commando. Gray responded with a lengthy apologetic letter, explaining that he only did it because he realized that a sizable percentage of his audience was black.

All of which might make Gray seem a somewhat unpleasant character. But he also received a number of letters praising his use of a black character, including one from the Secretary of the Chicago Urban League, and he answered these too. Both the Southern publisher and the Chicago Urban League Secretary wrote letters back to Gray thanking him for his understanding letter and that they saw things their way! Gray was a man who wanted to please his public, on whatever side of the fence they stood. He spent much of his time driving around the country with Mrs. Gray and chatting with ordinary people of all sorts, in an effort to reflect the peoples' viewpoint in his work, and while he does not seem to have cared much when the critics attacked him, he seems to have been genuinely upset when an everyday newspaper reader took exception to the strip's content, be that reader segregationist or civil-rights worker.

One of Gray's most controversial stories, interestingly was one in which political content was secondary to a genuinely melodramatic storyline. It began with "Daddy" Warbucks dying; an act that was shocking, although less so than it might otherwise have been, as he had done it before and returned in one way or another, as had Annie. (Over and over again, Gray had his characters become deathly ill and survive only through the miracles of modern medicine, or become blinded and recover through a new cure. Amateur psychiatrists may speculate whether this was a reaction to the death of a wife who had not reached her 30s.) After Warbucks's death, Annie and Sandy fell into the hands of Mrs. Bleating-Hart, a social-worker who practically treated Annie like a slave. (Mrs. Bleating-Hart was

most certainly a return attack on Gray's part against a number of prominent social workers who had written to Mrs. Roosevelt about the possibility of censoring *Little Orphan Annie* after Annie had complained bitterly about child labor laws.) For months, Mrs. Bleating-Hart abused Annie more and more, prompting Gray's readers to send a remarkable flood of letters, cursing him for his abuse of a poor orphan. People took Annie's welfare very seriously indeed, and Gray milked this fact by trying their patience with him to the breaking point, and then having Annie rescued—by "Daddy" Warbucks himself, who was only hiding out until the atmosphere was better. (He returned, not so coincidentally, shortly after FDR's death.) Almost none of the letters Gray received on this storyline mentioned the attacks on FDR or social workers; the *critics* didn't like it, but the vast majority of Gray's readers were far more upset by the used alarm clock that Mrs. Bleating-Hart gave Annie for Christmas.

The mid-1940s has been busy indeed for Annie and Gray; the later part of the decade saw them out of the spotlight, but Gray did some of his best work in this period. His art reached its high point here; its limitation-tinged aspects had vanished. His use of shading had become masterful, and his figures, now more realistically proportioned but no less striking, were more vividly of their own unique world than ever. And Gray continued to develop interesting stories, including a sequence dealing with a comic strip entitled "Little Widget the Waif," which satirized his own strip as savagely as it ever has been attacked. It also mocked comics readers, leading some to think that Gray hated his audience. This is unlikely to have been true, for Gray was a man who maintained a huge mailing list of readers who had written fan letters, so that he could send them his excellent and delightful Annie Christmas cards each year. This sequence was merely Gray's extended self-satire; he was well aware of at least most of the unorthodox aspects of his strip, and occasionally made amusing comments upon them through his characters. He also tried, without success, to give his characters pupils, and Annie a more varied wardrobe; he got so many letters complaining about these changes that he reverted to the old style each time, although he was again experimenting with beady little pupils in Annie's eyes at the time of his death.

Another story of the late '40s contained one of Gray's most open and brutal examples of editorializing, yet went unnoticed by the critics. It was a 1949 story dealing with book-burning and censorship of all sorts, and Gray was positively vicious in his tirade against those who would tell others what they could or could not read. But this time, Gray, whose opinions were in large part based on his belief in individual freedom and keeping out of the other fellow's business, was in this particular case on the side of his critics, and escaped attack for one of his most powerful, superbly convincing stories. By this period, the world of Gray's strip, while very different than ours, was a full, integrated one, convincing and complete on its own terms. Gray's work had always been strangely inconsistent, with several excellent months being followed by a dull period of equal length; this changed only in the late '40s, when the strip was consistently excellent, at least in this *Little Orphan Annie* reader's mind.

The strip declined somewhat during the '50s, but the decline was a slow one and the strip remained well done and highly readable. One problem was that it became more formularized than in the past, and a bit more of a soap opera. Gray still devoted an enormous amount of time to the strip, but he now was an officer of a local bank and spent a fair amount of hours there, being a sort of small-time "Daddy" Warbucks. The Grays were also on the road much of the time, between their Connecticut home and one in Reno, and later, La Jolla, California. In 1956, somebody suggested to Gray that he do a sequence on juvenile delinquency, and so the Grays set out on a three-month car trip to research the problem firsthand. These experiences resulted in a *Little Orphan Annie* story that was to stir up a tempest that would result in a sizable chunk of the strip's papers dropping it. The story, a soap opera chronicling the rise of a teenager through the ranks of a gang, on his way to a career in organized crime, managed to offend perhaps more people on more different grounds than Gray had ever done with one story before. Union magazines were upset by hints that unions were tied up in organized crime; religious magazines were incensed by Collar John, a priest without a church who was not above using his fists; and so on. The newspaper editors were most bothered by the violence, which was less subdued than it had been in the past in the strip, and indeed, remains disturbing today. Events climaxed with an ex-policeman kicking a young punk to death, an event which, thankfully, happened offstage; but it was implicitly approved of by Gray, for the young punk had previously killed an innocent panhandler himself. By that point numerous papers had already dropped the strip, and Gray was ordered to move on to other matters by the syndicate. He was almost done with the story anyway, but complied and ripped up about a week's worth of strips and replaced them with new ones that curtailed the storyline.

The cancellations caused by the teen-gang episode brought the strip's circulation down to around 350 papers, the number the feature would keep until after Gray's death. The strip had clearly declined in popularity polls, but a nationwide poll in 1960 placed its as the third most popular strip in the country, right behind *Blondie* and *Dick Tracy*. In the late '50s and '60s the strip grew increasingly quirky; Gray's art went into a sharp decline, partially because his hand had grown shaky and his dialogue became heavy with semi-colons a form of punctuation seen in no other comic strip. The strip no doubt continued to please many of its old fans, but it is hard to imagine it garnered many new one.

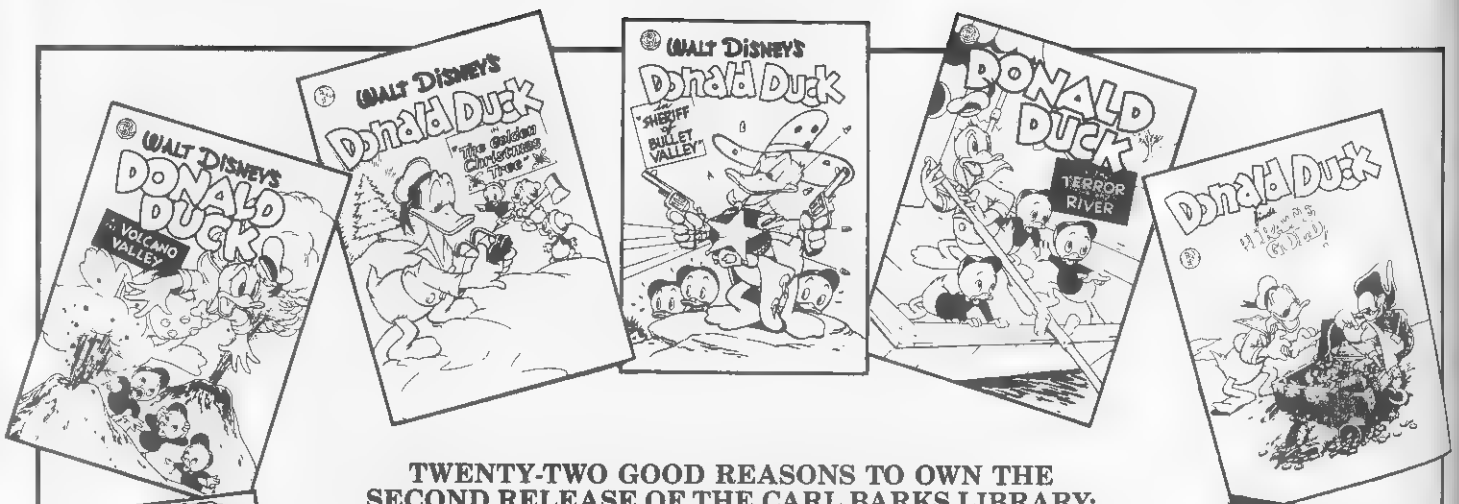
Gray's stories, interestingly, grew more humorous, and the strip harked back in some ways to its early days, and Gray actually reintroduced Pee-Wee the elephant, a pal of Annie from the '20s. At other times, the strip was more humorless than it ever had been, particularly in an early '60s sequence in which Warbucks publicly hanged the dictator of a South American country. There was one last controversial episode in 1965, when "Daddy" and Annie were committed to an insane asylum by one Doctor LeQuacke, who had been bribed by one of "Daddy's" enemies. This story brought a few suspensions and editorials maintaining that such a thing couldn't happen in real life. Gray, even working at considerably less than peak form, was still able to make even his critics take the welfare of his characters very seriously indeed. Nobody, after all, ever said a word about *Count Screwloose of Tooloose*'s portrayal of asylum life, which was at least as unrealistic as *Orphan Annie*'s.

Even as he passed his seventieth birthday, Gray continued to do the strip nearly single-handedly, still working 12-hour days much of the time. Even the discovery that he had cancer did not slow him down; he could have turned some or all of the art work over to his cousin Bob, but he never did. By the spring of 1968, Gray was clearly very ill, and the strip declined rapidly, Gray's once sound ear for dialogue in particular vanishing almost completely. As he had before, he had given "Daddy" Warbucks a mysterious disease, and as Gray neared death, so did Warbucks.

More than one history of the comics has reported that Gray, in fact, killed off "Daddy" Warbucks, to ensure that the strip would be discontinued with his death. And that idea may well have crossed his mind. But Harold Gray, after all, was the one who had killed "Daddy" off so many times before, only to have him reappear when he was most needed. "Daddy" may well have been immortal, but Harold Gray wasn't, and died on May 9, 1968, at his home at La Jolla. "Daddy" of course, lived on, a cure for his ailment being discovered at the very last moment. But this cure was not created, as has been reported, by the ghosts who continued the strip briefly after Gray's death, but by Gray himself. In the last strip he ever wrote, a few days before his death, *he* reported that the "sure cure" had been discovered, ensuring that "Daddy" Warbucks would live on.

Gray's outline for this final strip, written in an extremely shaky hand, also began a new story, so he may not have known that it was the last strip he would write. But perhaps he did for he selected for that yellow box below the famous logo on this Sunday page and epitaph as fitting as could be imagined to his 44 year career on the strip. It was a quotation from Sterne's *A Sentimental Journey*: "I think there is a certain fatality in it—I seldom go to the place I set out for."

That quotation did make the strip, in the July 21, 1968 episode, which combined Gray's work with that of ghosts, and set the strip up for the new artist and writer whose work began the next day. Annie, "Daddy" Warbucks, and Sandy would live on, seeing some of their toughest times and closest shaves in the years after Gray's death. They are, of course, immortal, and by providing them with this most sought-after of qualities, Harold Gray provided himself with the quiet behind-the-scenes kind of immortality that he would have wanted.



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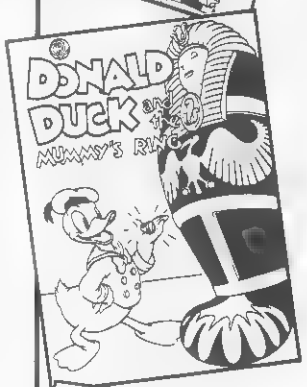

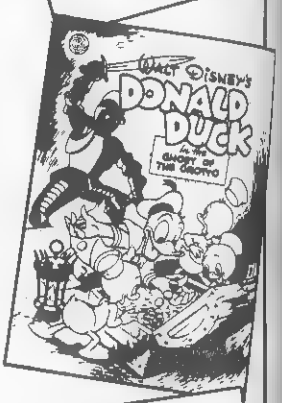

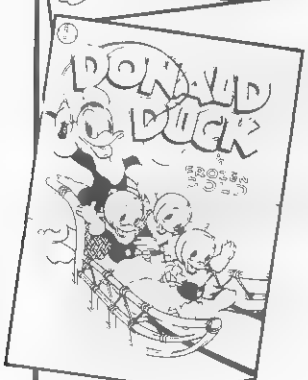

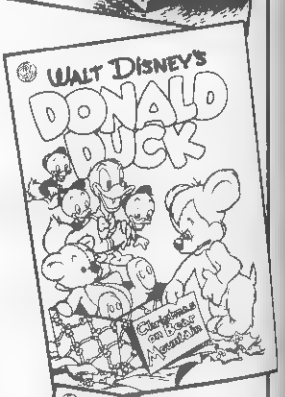

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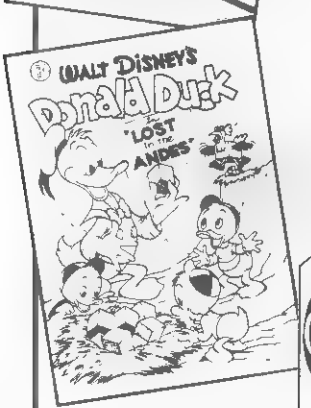

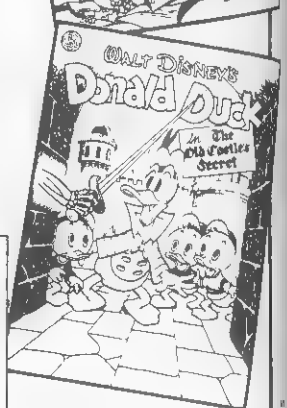

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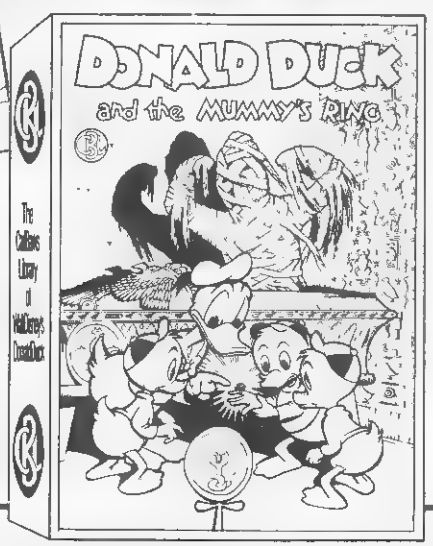

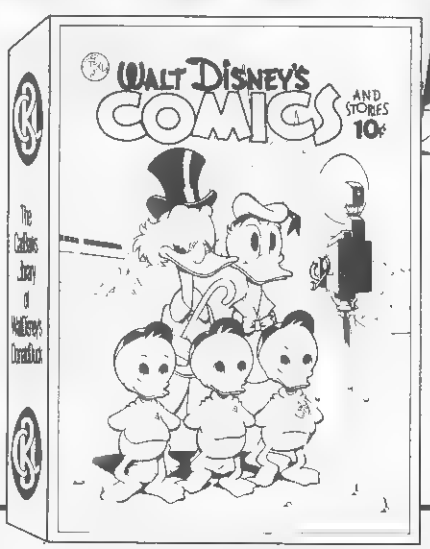

Our second release—Set I—is now available. It comes in three 9"×12" hardbound volumes and is slipcased for a handsome presentation. The complete *Sheriff of Bullet Valley* and all covers are in color.

ONLY $100 PPD.

Our first release—Set VIII—is also available. It features Barks' classic 10-page stories from *Walt Disney's Comics and Stories* 95-166. The stories are in B&W, as Barks drew them, covers in color.

ONLY $90 PPD.

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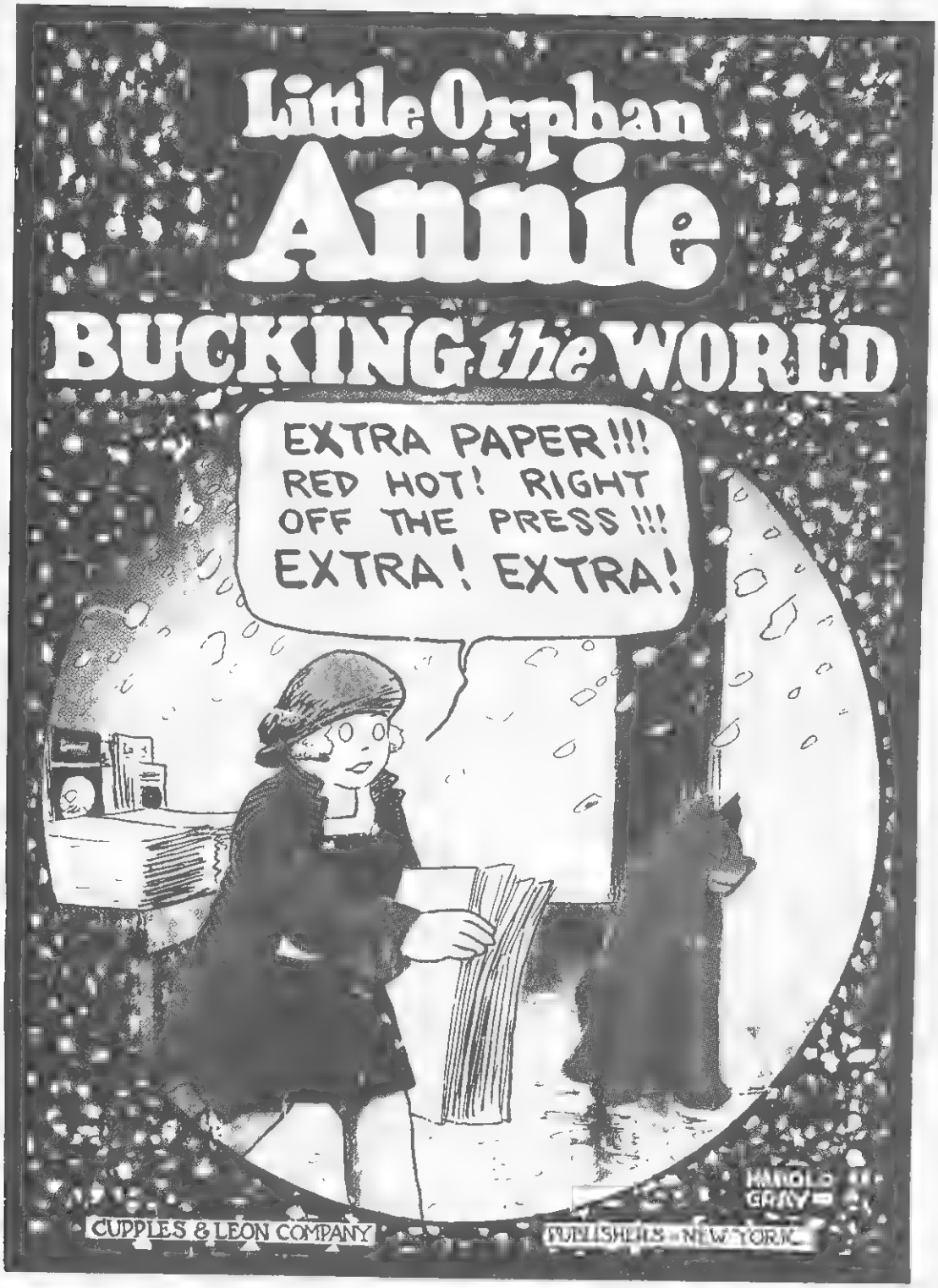
Little Orphan Annie
BUCKING the WORLD
EXTRA PAPER!!! RED HOT! RIGHT OFF THE PRESS!!! EXTRA! EXTRA!
HAROLD GRAY
CUPPLES & LEON COMPANY
PUBLISHERS NEW YORK

A NEMO Bonus:

Complete Reprint of A Rare LOA Book From the Classic Years

In the past *NEMO* has reprinted complete runs of strips or major sequences of continuities. In this special *Little Orphan Annie* issue, we are happy to present a complete reprint of a book.

There are two reasons for doing so. One is economy of space. This 1929 Cupples and Leon book was edited under Harold Gray's supervision, and is a selection of daily strips that summarized a long, and significant, sequence. We could not find a major *Little Orphan Annie* sequence from Gray's golden years that ran less than eight months —far longer than the scope of a reprint section within this magazine. So Gray's own edited version of "A Willing Helper" serves very well.

The second reason is to provide *NEMO* readers with a collectors item. This book is scarce in the collector's market, one of nine hardback reprint books Cupples and Leon issued in the '20s and '30s. The publisher was arguably the first major comic-book house, publishing dozens of newspaper-strip reprints in the 'teens, '20s, and '30s. Their major titles were *LOA*, *Bringing Up Father*, *Mutt and Jeff*, and *Moon Mullins*.

Finally, this sequence happily contains many of the elements referred to by the three writers in this issue, and seems perfectly representative of Gray's technique at his apogee. Welcome to Annie's world in 1928.

—R.M.

IT SURE WAS A LOTTA WORK, GETTIN' THIS STAND FIXED UP HERE YESTERDAY- BUT IT'LL BE WORTH IT- HERE COMES TH' FIRST OF TH' CROWD NOW- AN' THERE COMES THAT BIG BOZO AN' HIS KID BROTHER TOO- HOPE THEY DON'T START ANYTHING-
YES, SIR- RIGHT HERE YOU ARE, MISTER- BLIZZARD SWEEPS NORTH-WEST- SNOWSLIDE BLOTS OUT TOWN-
GEE- I SURE SOLD OUT QUICK, AN' I TOOK SOME EXTRA PAPERS, TOO- THIS STAND DID IT- EVERBODY BOUGHT O' ME- THOSE TWO BUTINSKIS HARDLY GOT A SMELL-
THAT PROVES IT- EVER SINCE I FOUND THIS OLD HORSE-SHOE I'VE BEEN LUCKY- JUST KNOWIN' I'VE GOT IT SORTA GIVES ME CONF'DENCE, OR SOMETHIN'-
HAROLD GRAY

GEE- THERE'S MOST FORTY CENTS IN TH' BANK ALREADY- I'LL LEAVE IT THERE FOR CHANGE- NOBODY'LL TAKE IT-
HEY, KID- BRING ME A PAPER. WILL YOU?
SURE THIS IS A FINAL. ARE YOU?
YES, SIR- VERY LATEST- BIG FIRE ON SOUTH SIDE-
LEAPIN' LIZARDS! CLEANED!!! EVERY CENT GONE- AND I ONLY TURNED MY BACK FOR A SECOND- NOW WHO COULD BE THAT MEAN AN' LOW DOWN?
YEAH! I THOUGHT SO- THOSE TWO GUYS ARE BACK- OH, WELL- WHAT'S FORTY CENTS? IT'D BE AN AWFUL JOB TO LICK BOTH OF 'EM- AN' 'SIDES, A ROW WOULD HURT BUSINESS- BUT I'D JUST LIKE TO CATCH 'EM DOIN' IT-
HAROLD GRAM
GWAN- IF YUH T'INK I TOOK YER DOUGH WHY DON'TCHA SEARCH ME? WE LIKE DIS CORNER AN' WE'RE STAYIN', SEE? NOW YOU'SE PIPE DOWN AN' GET YERSELF ANOTHER SPOT-
SOCK ME WILL YUH? YUH BIG YAP- IF YER SO MUCH COME ON IN AN' TRY THAT AGAIN- JUST TRY IT-
AW, CRACK HER HARD, ONCE-
THERE! PLAY THAT ONE ON YER PICCOLO!
CHEE!
BY GOLLY, ANNIE, YOU SURE LAID THAT GUM OUT NEAT-
SURE! MY HORSE-SHOE DID IT- I KNEW WHEN I FOUND IT IT'D BRING ME LUCK-
HUH! NOT A WASHOUT YOU ARE- LET A GIRL TRIM YUH- C'MON- GIT UP-
HAROLD GRAM
LISTEN, YOUSE! YOU GOT NO RIGHT ON DIS CORNER- I'M JUST TELLIN' YUH- SEE? WHERE'S YER LICENSE?
LICENSE? AW, I LEFT IT HOME- SAY- WHAT'S TH' RACKET? HAVE THOSE TWO SORE-HEADS BEEN SQUAWKIN' 'BOUT ME?
DESE GUYS ARE FRIENDS O' MINE- SEE? AND THEY'RE IN- GET ME? C'MON- WHERE'S YER LICENSE?
LISTEN- I'LL GET A LICENSE-
NIX- YOU WON'T GET NO LICENSE- TO PEDDLE SHEETS YUH GOTTA BE O.K.D BY TH' CHIEF O' POLICE- WHAT CHANCE YOU GOT AROUND CITY HALL? NOW YOUSE GET OFF DIS CORNER AND STAY OFF OR YOU'LL GET INTO PLENTY TROUBLE- GET ME?
DARN TIN-HORN POLITICIAN- KEYSTONE TOUGH! BUT HE DOES STAND IN WITH TH' ALDERMAN- HOW WAS I TO KNOW I HAD TO HAVE A LICENSE TO MAKE A LIVIN'? GEE WHISKERS! THAT'S RICH-
HAROLD GRAM
GEE! I MADE MORE TO-DAY 'N ANY DAY YET- I WAS AFRAID THAT TIN HORN POLITICIAN WAS COMIN' BACK TO SPOIL THINGS, BUT I GUESS HE'S FORGOT 'BOUT ME-
SAY! DIDN'T I TELL YOU YESTERDAY TO GET OFF DIS CORNER? WA-A-A-L! I MEANT IT- SEE?
AW, WHAT YOU GOT AGAINST ME? I NEVER DID ANYTHING TO YOU, DID I?
DAT'S ALL RIGHT- I'VE WARNED YOUSE TWICE- IF YOU'RE HERE TO-MORROW YOU'LL GET YOURS- YOU AIN'T WANTED ON DIS CORNER- DAT'S ENOUGH, AIN'T IT?
LEAPIN' LIZARDS! HE MEANT THAT, TOO- BUT I'M NOT GOIN' TO QUIT JUST 'CAUSE SOME BIG-MOUTH TELLS ME TO- I'M GOIN' TO STICK- I'VE GOT TO- WHAT WOULD TH' KIDS AT HOME DO IF I LOST MY JOB?
HAROLD GRAM
COME ON AN' GET IT, YUH BLAMED YELLOW-BACKS! A WHOLE GANG TO LICK ONE KID, AN' ME A GIRL-
HEY, YOUSE GUYS- DO YER STUFF- TOSS HER OFF TH' CORNER HARD, SEE? SO SHE WON'T COME BACK-
YA-A-A-H! THERE'S A KISS FOR YUH, MONKEY-FACE- WHO'S NEXT?
GO ON IN THERE! WHATCHER SCARED OF? SHE'S ONLY A KID-
OO-P! WHAT TH'----?
GET HER!
KNOCK HER BLOCK OFF-
DOG-GONE IT! I LOST MY LUCKY HORSE-SHOE- I WAS GETTIN' ALONG GREAT TILL THAT BLAMED STRING BUSTED- SURE HAILED THAT TWO-BIT POLITICIAN- NOW I AM IN A JAM-
HAROLD GRAM

WHERE'S THAT LITTLE GIRL WHO'S BEEN RUNNING THIS STAND?
AW, SHE QUIT DIS CORNER- GIRLS AIN'T NO GOOD IN DIS RACKET- I GUESS SHE GOT WISE TO HERSELF-
HEY! JOHN!
WHAT'S ON YOUR MIND, DAD? DID YOU WANT TO SEE ME?
I WANT TO TELL YOU IT'S AN OUTRAGE! D'YE UNDERSTAND? AN OUTRAGE! THEY STOLE HER CORNER- THAT LITTLE GIRL STARTED THAT STAND ALONE AND, WHEN IT GOT GOING GOOD, THEY STOLE IT-
BUT DAD- I CAN'T HELP IT- I'LL TELL THE BOSS IT'S UP TO HIM, YOU KNOW-
YOU TELL HIM TO SEE ME- SEE? I SAW IT ALL- SHE FOUGHT LIKE A WILD-CAT- BUT WHAT CHANCE DID SHE HAVE? SHYSTER POLITICIANS' THUGS- BAH! IS THE REFLECTOR GOING TO STAND FOR IT? YOU TELL YOUR BOSS TO SEE ME-
GEE- DAD'S SURE GIVIN' JOHN MERRY HALLELUJAH 'BOUT SOMETHIN'- WONDER WHAT- BUT SINCE THAT ROW [redacted]DAY THAT GANG'D LAY ME COLD IF THEY COULD CATCH ME- I GOTTA KEEP A SAFE DISTANCE-
HAROLD GRAY
WELL, THOSE BIRDS AREN'T SELLIN' HALF TH' PAPERS I DID- BUT I'M NOT SELLIN' ANY NOW- GEE- LOOK AT THAT BIG CAR TEARIN' DOWN TH' STREET- WHEW!
GEE - THAT'S MR. WALSH, TH' CIRCULATION BOSS FROM TH' REFLECTOR- WONDER WHAT HE'S DOIN' IN THIS END O' TOWN-
ALL RIGHT, DAD- PIPE DOWN A SECOND AND TELL ME WHERE THIS KID LIVES- I'LL LOOK INTO THIS MYSELF-
I'LL HAVE MY SAY- IT'S AN OUTRAGE- SHE'S LIVIN' IN A SHACK UP AT TH' END O' CORK-SCREW ALLEY- KEEPIN' A WHOLE FAMILY FROM STARVIN'- AND YOU'VE LET A BUNCH OF ☆!!!✱☆☆!!!-
DOG GONE IT- I MIGHT AS WELL GO HOME WHERE IT'S WARM- I'LL NEVER GET THAT CORNER BACK- I BET THEY MADE UP WITH TH' BIG BOSS- HE WAS THERE LONG ENOUGH LOOKIN' AROUND- AW, WHAT'S TH' USE? A KID'S GOT NO CHANCE-
HAROLD GRAY
WHAT A DUMP TO HAVE TO LIVE IN-
YOU BOYS WAIT IN THE CAR- I'LL BE RIGHT OUT-
SHE'S A SPUNKY LITTLE KID- DIDJA EVER SEE HER?
HELLO, THERE, YOUNG LADY- WELL, WELL- YOU HAVE QUITE A FAMILY HERE- MAY I COME IN?
ER- ER- OH, HELLO, MR WALSH- SURE- COME RIGHT IN-
SO YOU'VE TAKEN THE JOB OF RAISING THESE FOUR YOUNGSTERS, EH? PRETTY BIG ORDER FOR A LITTLE GIRL LIKE YOU, ISN'T IT, ANNIE?
YI-I-I-I
WELL, YUH SEE, I'VE ALWAYS WANTED A HOME- WE WERE GOIN' GOOD TILL I LOST MY STAND-
LISTEN, ANNIE- YOU BE ON THAT CORNER DAY AFTER TO-MORROW WHEN THE PAPER TRUCK IS DUE- DON'T FORGET, NOW.
YES, SIR- I'LL BE THERE, ALL RIGHT-
HAROLD GRAY
GEE WHIZ MERS! I CAN'T GET OVER MR. WALSH, TH' CIRCULATION MANAGER O' TH' REFLECTOR, COMIN' TO SEE ME YESTERDAY-
'MAGINE A BIG GUY, LIKE HE IS, TAKIN' TIME TO LOOK ME UP - HE SURE HAD ME SCARED FOR A MINUTE- HES SO BIG AN' TOUGH LOOKIN'- BUT GEE- HE'S SWELL WHEN YUH GET TO KNOW HIM-
SANDY AN' TH' KIDS WERE CRAZY 'BOUT HIM RIGHT AWAY AN' HE MADE AN AWFUL FUSS OVER THEM, TOO- ANY GUY THAT GOES BIG WITH DOGS AN' KIDS IS ALL RIGHT, B'LIEVE ME- GEE - ANOTHER COUPLE O' DAYS AN' WE'RE GOIN' TO BE BUSTED AT THIS RATE-
HE SAID FOR ME TO BE AT TH' CORNER TO-MORROW- COURSE I'LL GO- BUT THAT GANG O' HOODLUMS'LL BE THERE- I'D FEEL LOTS BETTER IF I HADN'T LOST MY HORSE-SHOE - SURE WISH I KNEW WHAT'S GOIN' TO HAPPEN-
HAROLD GRAY
DON'T LET HER GET AWAY- JUST LET ME GET MY MITTS ON HER- I'LL LEARN 'ER TO SOCK ME WIT' A HORSE-SHOE-
YOU'VE BEEN TOLD TO KEEP OFF DIS CORNER, AIN'TCHA?
SAY! I'VE GOT ORDERS FROM MR WALSH TO BE HERE- SEE?
LISTEN HERE I GOT SOMETHIN' TO SAY IN DIS WARD- WHO YUH TINK 'ER PICKIN' ON?
NOT ANY MORE, YOU HAVEN'T- I'VE SEEN TO THAT- AND YOU EVER TOUCH THAT KID AND I'LL BLIND YUH- SEE?
NIX! NIX!
GEE, MR WALSH- YOU SURE GOT HERE JUST IN TIME THOSE GUYS ALMOST GOT ME-
OH, WE WERE WATCHING FROM DOWN THE STREET- THEY'RE NOT THE KIND WE WANT SELLING REFLECTORS- HERE'S YOUR LICENSE, ANNIE- I GOT IT ALL FIXED UP FOR YOU YESTERDAY-
THOSE HOODLUMS WON'T BE BACK- YOU'RE ALL SET NOW- IF ANYBODY BOTHERS YOU JUST PHONE THE OFFICE- I'LL BE OVER HERE IN FIVE MINUTES- WE WANT CLEAN-CUT YOUNGSTERS LIKE YOU HANDLING THE REFLECTOR AND WHEN WE FIND 'EM WE BACK 'EM- SEE?
GEE- YOU SURE ARE A REAL GUY TO WORK FOR-

LEAPIN' LIZARDS! I SURE CLEANED UP TO-DAY- I'M GOIN' TO ORDER MORE PAPERS TO-MORROW- I CAN SELL 'EM EASY- I GUESS THOSE ROUGH NECKS WON'T BE PESTERIN' ME MUCH ANY MORE, EITHER, AFTER WHAT THEY GOT TOLD YESTERDAY-
HELLO, DAD- GEE, I SURE HAD A BIG DAY TO-DAY- WAS YOU IN ON TH' ROW YESTERDAY?
YEP- HEARD EVERY WORD OF IT- THOSE YOUNG THUGS WON'T BE BACK- THEY AREN'T GOIN' TO FOOL WITH MR. WALSH- HE MEANS BUSINESS AND THEY KNOW IT-
THEY'RE TOUGH- BUT HE'S PLENTY TOUGHER- GOTTA BE TO BE CIRCULATION BOSS IN A CITY AS HARD AS THIS- FOLKS JUDGE A PAPER A LOT BY WHO SELLS IT AN' HE'S GOIN' TO PICK WHO HE WANTS - HE'S FAIR- YOU STARTED THAT STAND AND YOU WAS MAKIN' GOOD- HE KNEW THAT-
HE WASN'T GOING TO LET A BUNCH O' BULLIES RUN YOU OUT O' BUSINESS- HE STICKS UP FOR THOSE AS DO THE RIGHT THING- THAT'S WHY HE'S TH' BIG BOSS- TOUGH? HE'S GOTTA BE TOUGH SOME TIMES-
HAROLD GRAY
JUST STOPPED TO TELL YOU, ANNIE- I'LL DRIVE OUT IN MY CAR TO THE HOSPITAL TO-MORROW AND BRING MRS. PEWTER HOME- NOW YOU HAVE THE TWINS READY AT EIGHT O'CLOCK AND I'LL TAKE THEM ALONG FOR THE RIDE-
GEE, DOC- THAT'S SWELL O' YOU-
DIDJA HEAR THAT? YOU GUYS ARE GOIN' WITH DOC. AN' YOU'LL RIDE BACK WITH YOUR MAMA-
GEE!
GEE!
WHADDYUH THINK O' THAT? YER MAMA'S COMIN' HOME TO-MORROW IN A SWELL AUTOMOBILE- YES SIR- AN' YOU AN' HELEN AN' I ARE GOIN' TO GET TH' HOUSE ALL SLICKED UP 'TORE SHE GETS HERE-
GLUG!
GEE, IT'LL BE SWELL TO HAVE MRS. PEWTER HOME AGAIN- BUT I'VE GOTTA SEE THAT THINGS ARE CLEAN- SHE MUSTN'T HAVE ANYTHING TO FRET ABOUT-
HAROLD GRAY
HERE THEY ARE, HELEN- HURRY UP- COME ON OUT- HELLO, MRS. PEWTER!
ARF!
HELLO, ANNIE- HELLO, HELEN- MY, IT SEEMS GOOD TO BE HOME AGAIN-
GEE, WE'RE SURE TICKLED TO SEE YOU- JUST WAIT'LL YUH SEE JIM- HE'S GROWN SO YUH'D HARDLY KNOW HIM-
HELLO, MAMA-
JIM! OH, JIMMIE, BOY- DO YOU REMEMBER YOUR MAMA?
SURE HE REMEMBERS YOU- JUST LOOK AT HIM GRIN AN' HOLD OUT HIS PAWS-
YOU'RE TIRED AFTER YOUR TRIP HOME- BUT YOU JUST SIT HERE BY TH' FIRE- WE'LL HAVE SUPPER IN NO TIME- THAT'LL PEP YOU UP-
I AM RATHER TIRED, ANNIE- BUT I'M AFRAID IT'S NOT ALL THE TRIP HOME- I SEEM TO BE TIRED MOST OF THE TIME, LATELY-
HERE COMES DOC. NOW- I'LL ASK HIM WHAT HE FOUND OUT 'BOUT MRS. PEWTER YESTERDAY- I HOPE IT'S GOOD NEWS-
AS FAR AS THE INJURIES MRS PEWTER SUSTAINED ARE CONCERNED, SHE'S QUITE RECOVERED- BUT THE LONG ORDEAL HAS BROKEN HER HEALTH- SHE'S VERY WEAK AND STEADILY GETTING WORSE-
OH, DOC.!
TO BE PERFECTLY HONEST SHE CAN'T LIVE LONG UNDER PRESENT CONDITIONS - THE ONLY THING THAT WILL SAVE HER IS A COMPLETE CHANGE- COUNTRY AIR, MILK, EGGS, OUTDOOR LIFE - I AM SURE THAT WOULD MAKE HER WELL IN A SHORT TIME-
SHE WON'T LIVE IF SHE DOESN'T GO TO TH' COUNTRY! LEAPIN' LIZARDS! SHE'S GOTTA LIVE- BUT HOW CAN I GET HER TO TH' COUNTRY? AND TH' KIDS WOULD HAVE TO GO TOO OR SHE'D WORRY- WELL, I GUESS IT'S UP TO ME TO FIGGER IT OUT- GEE! AN' I THOUGHT WE WERE GETTIN' ALONG SO GOOD-
HAROLD GRAY
HOW IS YOUR APPETITE, MRS. PEWTER?
OH, I'M NOT VERY HUNGRY- BUT THEN I DON'T DO ANYTHING TO WORK UP AN APPETITE-
WAIT A MINUTE, DOC., TILL I GET MY COAT AN' I'LL WALK TO TH' CORNER WITH YUH-
NOW, DOC., GIMME TH' LOW DOWN ON THIS- I DIDN'T WANT TO TALK TOO MUCH IN FRONT O' HER-
WORSE EVERY DAY, ANNIE- IF SHE DOESN'T GET TO THE COUNTRY VERY SOON IT WILL BE TOO LATE-
GEE- THEN WE'VE GOT TO GO- AN' HELEN ISN'T GETTIN' OVER TH' FLU LIKE SHE OUGHTA, EITHER- SHE NEEDS TH' COUNTRY- WE ALL NEED IT- WELL, IF WE HAVE TO DO IT WE HAVE TO, THAT'S ALL- BUT HOW? THAT'S WHAT I'VE GOTTA DOPE OUT NOW-
HAROLD GRAY

WELL, THEY'RE ALL IN BED AN' ASLEEP- IT'S JUST AS WELL- I'VE GOTTA THINK- THERE'S TH' NEWS STAND- IF I COULD ONLY SELL THAT! MAYBE I COULD GET SOMETHIN' OUT OF IT, BUT NOT MUCH-
AN' TH' FURNITURE HERELL BRING MIGHTY LITTLE- RAILROAD FARE COSTS A HEAP, EVEN WITH TH' KIDS AT HALF FARE- AN' WE'LL ALL HAVE TO EAT-
AN' WHERE ARE WE GOIN' TO FIGGER ON GOIN', ANYWAY? I HAVEN'T TH' CRUST TO ASK TH' SILOS OR TH' FLINTS TO TAKE IN A WHOLE FAMILY, EVEN IF WE HAD TH' DOUGH TO GET THAT FAR- WHICH WE HAVEN'T-
SANDY- WE'RE IN AN AWFUL JAM- D'YUH KNOW IT? IF WE HAD TIME MAYBE WE COULD FIGGER OUT SOMETHIN'- BUT WE CAN'T STALL AROUND ANY LONGER WITH MRS. PEWTER TH' WAY SHE IS- TOMORROW I'M GOIN' TO START GETTIN' ACTION-
HAROLD GRAY
OH, HELLO, MR WELLS- YOU IN TOWN AGAIN, EH?
YES- I'M LYING OVER A DAY AND I JUST THOUGHT I'D COME OVER AND SEE HOW YOU AND THE FAMILY ARE MAKING OUT-
YOU LOOK RATHER WORRIED- WHAT'S THE MATTER?
LET'S SIT DOWN HERE AND I'LL TELL YUH- DON'T WANT TO TALK ABOUT IT AROUND TH' HOUSE- NO USE GETTIN' 'EM ALL WORRIED-
---- THERE, NOW- THAT'S BETTER- WAY THINGS STAND- SEE? THEY'VE GOT TO GO TO TH' COUNTRY, BUT I DON'T KNOW WHERE TO TAKE 'EM OR HOW TO GET 'EM THERE- THAT'S WHAT'S DRIVIN' ME NUTTY-
LISTEN- YOU BRING 'EM TO MAYFAIR- WE'VE GOT A BIG HOUSE- TH' MISSUS IS A REAL SCOUT- WE'LL PUT YOU ALL UP TILL YOU CAN GET ORGANIZED- AND YOU CAN GO IN THE CABOOSE ON MY TRAIN- WE'LL MAKE IT NEXT TUESDAY- HOW'S THAT?
GEE, MR WELLS- YOU'RE A REAL GUY-
HAROLD GRAY
IF I COULD ONLY SELL THIS STAND- BUT THERE ISN'T MUCH CHANCE- HMMM- THAT LOOKS LIKE MR. WALSH, TH' CIRC'LATION MANAGER, COMIN'- WONDER WHAT HE WANTS-
HELLO, ANNIE- SAY, I HEAR YOU'RE FIGURING ON LEAVING TOWN- SICKNESS IN THE FAMILY, EH? THAT'S TOO BAD-
YES SIR, MR. WALSH- BUT I'D LIKE TO SELL MY STAND 'FORE I GO- TH' KIDS NEED CLOTHES AN' EVER'THING-
WELL, MAYBE I'LL HEAR OF SOMEBODY WHO WANTS TO BUY YOU OUT- YOU'VE BUILT UP A GOOD CORNER HERE- I'LL BE MIGHTY SORRY TO SEE YOU GO-
NOW HOW D'YUH S'POSE MR. WALSH KNEW I WAS FIGGERIN' ON LEAVIN'? DIDN'T KNOW IT MYSELF TILL A COUPLE O' DAYS AGO- IT SURE BEATS ALL HOW SOME O' THOSE NEWSPAPER GUYS FIND OUT THINGS SO QUICK-
HAROLD GRAY
WELL, ANNIE, I FOUND A BUYER FOR YOUR STAND- I DID EVEN BETTER THAN THAT- I GOT HIS MONEY- BUT, OF COURSE, IF IT'S NOT AS MUCH AS YOU THINK THE STAND IS WORTH YOU DON'T HAVE TO ACCEPT IT.
LEAPIN' LIZARDS! WHY, MR. WALSH- I NEVER WOULD HAVE ASKED HALF THAT MUCH- DO YOU THINK TH' STAND'S WORTH IT?
SURE IT IS.
NOW, GOOD LUCK TO YOU, ANNIE- AND IF EVER YOU COME BACK TO THIS TOWN AND WANT A JOB YOU JUST LOOK ME UP- THAT'S ALL- THERE'LL ALWAYS BE A PLACE FOR YOU-
GEE, MR WALSH- YOU'VE SURE BEEN A WHITE GUY TO ME-
GREAT CAESAR'S SUSPENDERS! NOW I AM SET- I CAN GET COATS FOR TH' KIDS AN' SHOES AN' EVER'THING- AND WE'LL HAVE A REAL FEED TO NIGHT, TOO- GEE, FRIENDS LIKE MR. WALSH ARE ALWAYS NICE, BUT WHEN YER UP 'GAINST IT IS WHEN YUH 'PRECIATE 'EM TH' MOST, I GUESS-
HAROLD GRAY
WELL, HERE WE ARE- I HAD 'EM BACK IN HERE SO WE WOULDN'T HAVE SO FAR TO WALK-
GEE, I HAVEN'T BEEN ON A TRAIN FOR 'MOST A YEAR AND NEVER ON A CABOOSE-
WELL, THIS IS NO PARLOR CAR BUT I THINK YOU'LL FIND IT FAIRLY COMFORTABLE-
I'LL BE RIGHT BACK SOON AS I GIVE THE BOYS THE WORD TO LET 'ER GO- THIS IS A THROUGH FREIGHT AND WE HAVE TO MOVE ON OUR SCHEDULE-
HANG ON NOW, ANNIE- DON'T FALL OFF WHEN THE TRAIN STARTS-

WELL, THIS IS MAYFAIR AND THE END OF THE RUN- IT'S ONLY A LITTLE WAY UP TO THE HOUSE AND I SURE HOPE THE MISSUS HAS DINNER READY.
THIS ISN'T MUCH OF A PLACE- JUST A QUIET COUNTRY TOWN- BUT IT'S A NICE PLACE TO LIVE AND EVERYTHING IS MUCH CHEAPER THAN IN THE CITY- THERE- YOU CAN SEE THE HOUSE FROM HERE- THAT BIG OLD PLACE AT THE NEXT CORNER-
HELLO, FOLKS- COME RIGHT IN- DINNER'S ALMOST READY- THAT LONG RIDE OUGHT TO HAVE BEEN GOOD FOR YOUR APPETITES-
WELL, MYRTLE WE GOT HERE SAFE AND SOUND AND WE'RE HUNGRY AS BEARS.
IT'S WONDERFUL OF YOU, MRS WELLS, TO TAKE A WHOLE CROWD OF STRANGERS LIKE WE ARE, INTO YOUR HOME-
TUT, TUT- WE'VE GOT ALL KINDS OF ROOM HERE- IT WILL BE NICE TO HAVE FOLKS AROUND- WE ALWAYS HAD A CROWD AT HOME WHEN I WAS A GIRL- I HOPE YOU'LL LIKE THIS ROOM-
SUCH SUNSHINE! I COULD SIT HERE AND BAKE FOREVER I THINK AND NEVER GET ENOUGH-
IT'S THE BEST MEDICINE IN THE WORLD, AND FRESH AIR- AND GOODNESS KNOWS WE HAVE PLENTY OF BOTH HERE IN MAYFAIR-
WELL, BOYS I SEE YOU FOUND THE SAND PILE- DID YOU EVER HAVE SAND TO PLAY IN BEFORE?
NO MOM- BUT WE USED TO MAKE MUD PIES OUT IN TH ALLEY-
THIS IS THE CLEANEST DIRT I EVER SAW-
THE LITTLE LAMB- LOOK AT HIM HOLDING ONTO MY HAND- I WONDER SOME TIMES IF PEOPLE WITH CHILDREN OF THEIR OWN REALIZE HOW REALLY BLESSED THEY ARE-
GLOG! GLOG! GLOG!
YUH KNOW, SANDY, 'TISN'T RIGHT- THERE'S SOME FOLKS I'VE KNOWN THAT NEVER CARED MUCH 'BOUT KIDS BUT HAD A WHOLE FLOCK OF 'EM- AN' YUH TAKE A WOMAN WHO LOVES KIDS, LIKE MRS. WELLS, AND SHE HASN'T GOT A ONE OF HER OWN- NO, SANDY, IT'S ALL WRONG.
MY ANNIE YOU GO AT THAT JOB LIKE AN OLDTIMER-
GEE, I OUGHTA, AFTER ALL TH' S'PERIENCE I'VE HAD COOKIN' AND BAKIN' AND DOIN' HOUSE-WORK EVER SINCE I CAN REMEMBER-
SURE HOPE THIS PIE TURNS OUT ALL RIGHT- I WANT TO DO ALL I CAN TO HELP MRS. WELLS AFTER THEM TAKIN' US IN LIKE THIS, KNOWIN' WE'RE TOO POOR TO PAY OUR WAY-
AND, EVEN IF THINGS ARE CHEAPER HERE THAN BACK IN TH' CITY, IT COSTS PLENTY TO FEED A CROWD LIKE US THREE TIMES A DAY, AND LUNCHES BETWEEN TIMES-
DIDJA SEE TH' TWINS THIS MORNING? THREE HELPIN'S O' SAUSAGE AN' I LOST COUNT O' TH' WHEAT CAKES THEY PUT AWAY- I NEVER WAS SO 'BARRASSED IN ALL MY LIFE- BUT TH' POOR KIDS- YUH CAN'T BLAME THEM WHEN TH' GRUB'S SO GOOD AN' PLENTY IN SIGHT-
THERE'S TH' RAILROAD YARDS OVER THERE- IF THIS WASN'T A DIVISION POINT THEY'D HARDLY NEED A TOWN HERE AT ALL- NOTHIN' FOR A KID TO DO IN A PLACE LIKE THIS-
"WAITRESS WANTED"- HM-M-M... IF I WAS ONLY A LITTLE OLDER MAYBE I COULD LAND THAT JOB- COURSE I'VE NEVER HAD MUCH S'PERIENCE BUT I COULD GET AWAY WITH IT, I BETCHA-
WAITRESS WANTED
"RAILROAD LUNCH"- THIS MUST BE WHERE TH' GUYS EAT THAT WORK IN TH' YARDS- NOT MUCH OF A PLACE TO LOOK AT-
RAILR
LUN
WAITRESS WANTED
COURSE I'M LITTLE- BUT THERE ISN'T SO MUCH TO BEIN' A WAITRESS AS I CAN SEE- ALL YUH GOTTA DO IS ASK WHAT FOLKS WANT AN' GIVE IT TO 'EM- THAT HADN'T OUGHTA TAKE SO MUCH BRAINS- I WONDER, NOW----
I SEE BY YER SIGN IN TH' WINDOW THAT YUH WANT A WAITRESS- HOW ABOUT GIVIN' ME A SHUT AT TH' JOB, MISTER?
HAW! HAW! HAW! WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT BEING A WAITRESS? WHY, YOU'RE JUST A KID- YOU'D BETTER HURRY HOME AND PLAY WITH YOUR TRICYCLE-
SAY! DON'T TRY TO GET WISE WITH ME- THERE'S NO HAMSEED IN MY HAIR- I'VE BEEN AROUND, SEE? I'M AN A-1 WAITRESS- DO I GET TH' JOB OR NOT? THAT'S ALL I WANT TO KNOW FROM YOU-
HM-M-M- YOU MIGHT DO AT THAT- YOU'RE HARD-BOILED ENOUGH WHEN YOU GET MAD- HELP IS HARD TO GET OUT HERE- I'LL GIVE YOU A TRIAL- YOU START TOMORROW MORNING-
THANKS.

TWO UP! HAM AN' COUNTRY AND A NUMBER THREE IN A HURRY-
DIDN'T PETE'S LAST WAITRESS RUN AWAY WITH A FIREMAN OR SOMETHING?
YEAH! TH' POOR FELLOW- BUT I'M GLAD SHE LEFT HERE - THIS YOUNGSTER IS WORTH SIX OF HER KIND - ALL BUSINESS - THAT'S WHAT I LIKE-
SAY, YOUNG LADY- HOW'S THE PIE CROP TO-DAY? ANY BLUEBERRY ON HAND?
YESSIR- WE HAVE BLUEBERRY BUT IF I WUZ YOU I'D TAKE TH' APPLE - IT'S FRESH AN' VERY FINE-
GIVE ME APPLE-
SAY! THAT KID'S NO FOOL - WONDER WHERE SHE CAME FROM-
WHY, SHE MUST BE THE YOUNGSTER WELLS BROUGHT OUT FROM THE CITY - THE BOYS ARE GOING TO LIKE HER-
THANKS!
HAROLD GRAY
SAY, ANNIE - HOW ABOUT A PIECE OF THAT MINCE PIE? CAN YOU GIMMIE A LITTLE SERVICE, HERE?
RIGHT AWAY, CHARLEY - BE WITH YUH IN A SECOND -
HELLO, HARRY - WHAT'S YOURS? TH' LIVER AN' ONIONS IS SWELL TO-DAY -
ALL RIGHT, ANNIE - I'LL TAKE YOUR WORD FOR IT -
SAY- THAT KID'S SURE ALL RIGHT-
RIGHT ?!! LISTEN - IT'S A PLEASURE TO LEAVE A TIP FOR HER - AND SHE EARNS IT, TOO-
LEAPIN' LIZARDS! TH' WAY THOSE GUYS LOOSENED UP FOR ME TO-DAY YUH'D THINK THEY WERE MILLIONAIRES - GEE - THIS SURE BEATS SELLIN' PAPERS ALL HOLLOW-
HAROLD GRAY
REG'LAR OLD SLAVE DRIVER - THAT'S WHAT HE IS - BUT PETE'S JUST TIGHT, I GUESS, AN' CAN'T HELP IT - IT SURE DOES GET HIS GOAT TO SEE ME TAKE IN A TIP NOW AN' THEN -
BUT I'LL KEEP MY MUG SHUT AN' WAIT AN' SEE WHAT HAPPENS - TO-MORROW'S SATURDAY AN' OUGHTA BE PAY DAY - NOTHIN'S BEEN SAID 'BOUT WHAT HE'S GOIN' TO PAY ME YET-
I'VE SURE WORKED HARD ENOUGH FOR THAT GUY, IF THAT MEANS ANYTHING TO HIM-
HE'D HAVE TO PAY A WAITRESS MORE'N HE'LL GIVE ME, I S'POSE - AN' I KNOW NO REAL WAITRESS'D EVER DO TH' SCRUBBIN AN' DISH-WASHIN' AN' DIRTY WORK I'VE DONE 'ROUND HERE - BUT WHEN YER A KID YUH'VE GOTTA STAND FOR A LOT SOME TIMES -
SAY, PETE - AREN'T YOU FORGETTING SOMETHING? YUH KNOW THIS IS SATURDAY - AREN'T YOU GOING TO GIVE ME MY PAY FOR TH' WEEK?
PAY! WHAT FOR? YOU HAVEN'T EARNED YOUR SALT - MORE TROUBLE THAN YOU'RE WORTH - YOU'RE THROUGH AROUND HERE - NO USE ARGUING, NOW - COME ON - GIT!
D'YUH M-M MEAN THAT? YER NOT JUST KIDDIN ?
FIRED! AND NO PAY - WHY-- WHY-- TH' BIG CROOK! CHEAT! ROBBER! THAT'S WHAT HE IS - AND I WAS SO S'PRISED I COULDN'T THINK OF A THING TO SAY - AND NOW IT'S TOO LATE -
BY GULLIVER!!! HE CAN'T DO THAT TO ME AND GET AWAY WITH IT - CAN ME, WILL HE? I'LL SHOW HIM!
BUT YOU CAN MAKE HER MOVE ON - VAGRANCY - LOITERING - SHE SHOULD BE IN SCHOOL - ANY NUMBER OF REASONS - SHE'S RUINING MY BUSINESS - DO YOUR DUTY -
SCHOOL'S CLOSED THIS WEEK - MEASLES - AND I CAN'T DO ANYTHING ELSE - SHE'S NOT BREAKING ANY LAW, AS I KNOW OF - JUST A KID - NOT FORCING ANYBODY TO STAY OUT OF YOUR PLACE -
HUH! PETE'S NOT GETTIN' FAR WITH TH' CHIEF - THAT'S SURE LUCKY FOR US, SANDY -
ON STRIKE FOR MORE MONEY BETTER WORKING CONDITIONS
HAROLD GRAY
WHADDYUH SAY, PETE? HOW'S BUSINESS?
BAH!

HELLO, JAKE- NICE DAY-
HELLO, ANNIE- STILL ON STRIKE, EH? THAT'S THE GIRL- DON'T GIVE IN- THE BOYS ARE ALL WITH YOU- WELL SEE YOU THROUGH-
YOU LITTLE TROUBLE-MAKER! JUST WAIT TILL I GET MY HANDS ON YOU- I'LL CHOKE YOU TILL YOUR TONGUE HANGS OUT- NO LAW, EH? I'LL MAKE A LAW THAT'LL BREAK UP YOUR GAME- I'LL--- I'LL---
YEAH? WANTA GET ROUGH, EH? I'VE BEEN QUIET, SEE? NO BUSTED WINDOWS- NO CRACKED HEADS- JUST A NICE, PEACEFUL STRIKE- BUT IF YUH WANTA START SOMETHIN'----
TH' BIG RUMMY! THINKS HE CAN BLUFF ME, EH? WISH HE WOULD SWING AT ME- BUT WHEN A BIRD KNOWS HE'S WRONG HE DON'T USUALLY WANT TO START REAL TROUBLE-
HAROLD GRAY
SURE, I'M WILLIN' TO TALK THINGS OVER WITH PETE-
YES, I'LL TAKE HER BACK IF WE CAN AGREE-
THAT'S THE SPIRIT- NOW, TO BEGIN WITH- HOW DID YOU HAPPEN TO FIRE ANNIE, ANYWAY-.
SHE WAS NOT A GOOD WAITRESS SO I HAD TO LET HER GO-
THAT'S NOT SO!!!! AND YOU KNOW IT-
NOW- NOW- KEEP COOL- YOU TWO WANT TO GET TOGETHER ON THIS-
BAH!!! SHE RUINED MY BUSINESS- I'LL GET MY CHANCE-- I'LL FIX HER-
FIX ME, WILL YUH!!! YUH BIG CHEAT! JUST YOU TRY IT!!
BLAH!!! I'LL FIX YOUR CLOCK, I WILL- NO- I WONT COME BACK- I'M THROUGH ARGUIN'- HUH- HOW CAN YUH GET ANYWHERE WITH AN UNREASONABLE BIRD LIKE THAT?
HELLO- YES- THIS IS ANNIE- WHAT'S THAT? YER NOT KIDDIN' ME, ARE YUH? YES... YES-- SURE- I'LL BE RIGHT DOWN-
LEAPIN' LIZARDS! TH' STRIKE'S OVER, SANDY- THAT WAS OLD MIKE- HE SAYS HE'S BOUGHT TH' REST'RANT FROM PETE AND HE WANTS ME TO HELP HIM RUN IT-
GEE, MIKE- I'M SURE GLAD TO HEAR IT- HOW DID YOU HAPPEN TO BUY THIS PLACE, ANYWAY?
WELL, ANNIE, PETE OFFERED IT CHEAP AND I HAD THE MONEY- HAD TO HAVE SOMETHING TO KEEP ME BUSY-
YOU SEE THE RAILROAD PAID ME PRETTY WELL WHEN I LOST MY LEG IN THE YARDS- THAT'S WHERE I GOT THE MONEY- BUT I DON'T KNOW MUCH ABOUT RUNNING A RESTAURANT, SO I'D LIKE YOU TO HELP ME, ANNIE-
SURE, MIKE- I'LL DO ALL I CAN TO HELP YOU-
HAROLD GRAY
THINK THIS WILL BE ENOUGH POTATOES FOR TO DAY, ANNIE?
I DUNNO- BUSINESS IS SURE SETTIN' HEAVY- BETTER PEEL ANOTHER PECK, I GUESS-
HERE THEY COME- 'LO, ED- 'LO, CHARLIE- BE RIGHT WITH YUH- WHAT'LL YOU HAVE TO-DAY?
YESSIR- TH' BOYS SURE ARE COMIN' BACK- AND BIRDS ARE EATIN' HERE NOW WHO NEVER EVEN LOOKED THIS WAY BEFORE-
WELL, TH' STRIKE WAS GOOD ADVERTISIN'- MADE FOLKS TALK 'BOUT THIS PLACE- AND WE'RE SERVIN' CLEAN MEALS AT A RIGHT PRICE- HONEST BUSINESS, THAT'S WELL ADVERTISED, ALWAYS GETS A GOOD PLAY, THEY SAY-
HAROLD GRAY
WELL, ANNIE- IT'S BEEN A GOOD WEEK- NOW WE'LL FIGURE UP JUST HOW MUCH PROFIT WE'VE MADE AND DIVIDE IT, FIFTY-FIFTY-
NIX, MIKE- WE DON'T EITHER OF US NEED ALL THAT DOUGH- AND SOME WEEKS MAY BE BUM- LET'S JUST TAKE FIFTEEN APIECE AND PUT TH' REST IN TH' BANK- THEN WE'LL HAVE PLENTY ON HAND IF ANYTHING HAPPENS-
GOOD NIGHT, ANNIE-
G'NIGHT, MIKE- SEE YUH TO-MORROW-
WELL SANDY- WHEN WE LEFT TH' CITY I DIDN'T SEE HOW WE'D EVER GET ANYWHERE IN A LITTLE BURG LIKE THIS- WOULDN'T, EITHER, IF I HADN'T HAD CRUST ENOUGH TO FIGHT BACK AT PETE- BUT IF YER REALLY SET ON MAKIN' GOOD YUH CAN DO IT ANY PLACE, I GUESS-
HAROLD GRAY

SIXTY-FIVE CENTS OUTA TEN BUCKS-
NICE DAY--
YEAH-
AW, WHY LOSE SLEEP OVER A BIRD LIKE THAT? HE SURE LOOKS LIKE A BAD ONE- BUT HE'S MOST LIKELY O.K. OR HE WOULDN'T BE WORKIN' FOR TH' EXPRESS COMPNY- IT'S NO SKIN OFF MY NOSE, ANYWAY- I'M GOIN' TO FORGET HIM-
HAROLD GRAY
NOW LOOK AT THAT, SANDY- WHADDYUH S'POSE RUFF IS DOIN' OUT THIS WAY? LOOKS LIKE HE'D BEEN FOR A WALK IN TH' COUNTRY-
DUST ALL OVER HIS SHOES- D'YUH NOTICE? BUT HE NEVER 'PRESSED ME AS BEIN' TH' TYPE THAT'D GET MUCH KICK OUTA WALKIN' IN TH' COUNTRY JUST TO LOOK AT TH' SCENERY-
I'D GIVE A PLUGGED NICKEL TO BE ABLE TO LOOK INSIDE O' THAT GUY AN' FIND OUT WHAT MAKES HIM TICK- JUST TO KNOW WHAT'S ON HIS MIND- SOMETHIN' IS, SANDY- THAT'S SURE-
YESSIR- AND IT'S NOT TH' EXPRESS BUSINESS, EITHER- S'POSE I'M TOO CURIOUS- IT'S NONE O' MY BUSINESS WHAT HE DOES- BUT I'M GOIN' TO KEEP AN EYE ON HIM FOR A FEW DAYS- I'VE GOT A HUNCH HE'S WORTH WATCHIN'-
ARF!
HAROLD GRAY
THERE GOES RUFF NOW- HE ALMOST GAVE ME TH' SLIP THAT TIME- NOW WHY WOULD HE GO SKYLARKIN' WAY DOWN TO TH' END O' TH' YARDS AT THIS TIME O' NIGHT?
THERE HE IS WAITIN' IN THAT SHADOW- SH-H-H-- HE WHISTLED TWICE, THEN- NOW HE'S JUST STANDIN' LOOKIN' INTO THOSE WOODS- I'VE GOTTA GET CLOSER-
NOW YOU'VE GOT TH' LAY, SEE? ALL YOU BIRDS HAVE GOTTA DO IS WHAT I TELL YUH- GET ME? IT'S ALL SET-
WELL- I'LL BE A SARDINE- THAT'S A FRAME-UP, SURE AS YER BORN- BUT WHAT ABOUT? IT'S NOTHIN' GOOD OR THOSE BIRDS WOULDN'T HAVE TO HIDE OUT HERE TO TALK IT OVER-
THIS IS MONDAY NIGHT AN' I HEARD THAT GUY, RUFF, SAY "MONDAY NIGHT"- SOMETHING'S DUE TO HAPPEN, BUT WHERE AN' WHAT? HAVEN'T SEEN RUFF ANY PLACE- I'M GOIN' DOWN TO TH' STATION AN' LOOK AROUND- GEE- NUMBER SIX IS LATE- OUGHTA HAVE BEEN THROUGH HALF AN HOUR AGO--
LEAPIN' LIZARDS! HERE COMES NUMBER SIX NOW- BUT ONLY PART OF IT- JUST TH' ENGINE AN' S'PRESS CAR- WONDER WHERE TH' REST O' TH' TRAIN IS- THAT'S SURE FUNNY-
WE'RE AT MAYFAIR- THEY STUCK UP NUMBER SIX THREE MILES OUT- CUT OFF THE EXPRESS CAR AND ENGINE BLEW THE EXPRESS CAR DOOR- SHOT THE MESSENGER- THEY'D KNOCKED THE AGENT HERE ON THE HEAD AND GOT THE COMBINATION FOR THE SAFE- CLEAN GET-AWAY- THERE WERE FIVE OF THEM- WELL DRESSED- CITY MOB ALL RIGHT-
THAT'S OLD BILL, THE AGENT- IS HE DEAD?
NO- BUT HE'S HAD A BAD CRACK ON THE HEAD-
HAROLD GRAY
WHOEVER THAT GANG WAS SURE HAD AN INSIDE TIP- THERE WAS OVER $150,000.00 IN THE EXPRESS SAFE-
YEAH, AND THEY KNEW THAT OLD BILL, THE EXPRESS AGENT HERE, HAD THE COMBINATION- THAT SAVED 'EM HAVING TO CRACK THE SAFE-
THEY MUST HAVE BEEN WORKING WITH SOME ONE ON THE INSIDE OR HOW WOULD THEY HAVE KNOWN WHEN THAT MONEY WAS BEING MOVED?
NOBODY BUT THE AGENT HERE AND THE ROUTE AGENT WERE SUPPOSED TO KNOW- BUT THOSE THINGS LEAK OUT SOME TIMES-
YEAH- LOTS OF GUYS YOU'D NEVER SUSPECT WILL TURN CROOKED IF THEY FIGURE THERE'S ENOUGH IN IT AND THEY CAN GET BY WITH IT-
FUNNY WHERE THAT GANG WENT TO- INSIDE OF THIRTY MINUTES EVERY ROAD WAS GUARDED, BUT THERE WASN'T A TRACE OF ANY OF THEM AND NOTHING TO SHOW WHICH WAY THEY WENT-
IF YUH ASK ME IT'S PLAIN AS TH' NOSE ON YER FACE THAT RUFF GUY IS TH' CURLY HAIRED BOY WHO TURNED TH' TRICK- BUT THERE'S ALWAYS A CHANCE I'M WRONG- SO I'M JUST GOIN' TO KEEP MY YAP SHUT TILL I KNOW MORE 'BOUT THIS-
HAROLD GRAY

YESSIR, SANDY- TH' WHOLE THING SURE LOOKS LIKE RUFF WAS TH' INSIDE GUY- BUT THEY SAY NOW HE WASN'T OUT OF HIS ROOM THAT NIGHT TILL THEY WENT AN' WOKE HIM UP-
BUT SOMEBODY HIT OLD BILL, TH' S'PRESS AGENT ON TH HEAD- COURSE ONE O' TH' GANG COULD HAVE DONE THAT-- THERE'S A BUNCH O' THE BOYS TALKIN' NOW-
YEAH- BILL'S GOIN' TO GET ALL RIGHT TH' DOC SAYS-
CONSCIOUS, EH? WHO DOES HE THINK HIT HIM ON THE HEAD?
HE DOESN'T KNOW- ALL HE REMEMBERS HE WAS WORKING AT HIS DESK AND HEARD SOMEONE COME IN BEHIND HIM.
AND THEY SHOT TH' MESSENGER- HE WASN'T IN ON IT, ANYWAY- BUT MAYBE HE KNEW SOMEBODY IN TH' GANG IS WHY THEY SHOT HIM- IT SURE IS A MIXED-UP AFFAIR- BUT I KNOW ONE THING- I'M NOT GOIN' TO BUTT INTO THIS- IT'S NONE O' MY BUSINESS-
HAROLD GRAY
Reg. U. S. Pat. Off. Copyright, 1928, by The Chicago Tribune
THE LOOT IS HIDDEN NEAR HERE- THAT'S SURE- BUT WHERE? WE'VE COMBED THE ENTIRE COUNTY, AND NOT A CLEW-
THAT MOB WE GRABBED IN THE CITY HAD AN AIR-TIGHT ALIBI- HAD TO TURN 'EM LOOSE- NO EVIDENCE- IT'S A TOUGH CASE, ALL RIGHT-
THOSE DETECTIVES ARE SMART, BUT THEY DON'T KNOW IT ALL- IF THEY DID THEY'D GRAB RUFF AN' TRY TO SWEAT SOMETHIN' OUTA HIM- BUT HE'D NEVER SPILL ANYTHING- HE'S TOO SMART-
LOOKIE, SANDY! LIB'RAL REWARD FOR ANYBODY WHO GIVES EV'DENCE LEADIN' TO ARREST AN' CONVICTION O' TH' ROBBERS AN' RECOVERY OF TH' MONEY THEY STOLE-
REWARD
THERE'S A THOUGHT- MAYBE IF I TOLD 'EM ABOUT RUFF ------ BUT THAT'S TOO RISKY- WE'LL WAIT A WHILE- WITH ALL TH' D'TECTIVES ON TH' JOB THEY'LL GET 'EM YET, AN' WHY GET MIXED UP IN IT? STILL, SOME O' THAT REWARD WOULDN'T GO SO BAD-
HAROLD GRAY
Reg. U. S. Pat. Off. Copyright, 1928, by The Chicago Tribune
RIGHT THERE'S WHERE IT HAPPENED, SANDY- THAT'S WHERE THEY BLEW TH' DOOR OFF TH' EXPRESS CAR AN' SHOT TH' MESSENGER AN' GOT TH' MONEY OUT O' TH' SAFE-
BUT WHERE DID THEY GO? THIS SURE IS ROUGH AROUND HERE- IT LOOKS AWFUL WILD TO ME- BUT FOLKS AROUND HERE CALL THESE JUST HILLS-
I'D THINK THEY COULD HIDE MOST ANYTHING IN A PLACE LIKE THIS- BUT FOLKS THAT ARE USED TO MOUNTAINS COULD FIND A PIN HID UNDER A STONE IN NO TIME, I S'POSE-
BUT WE'LL KEEP LOOKIN' FOR A WHILE- EVEN IF WE ARE GREEN-HORNS WE'VE GOT AS GOOD A CHANCE O' FINDIN' THAT DOUGH AS ANYBODY ELSE- STICKIN' TO A JOB- THAT'S WHAT COUNTS, SANDY-
HAROLD GRAY
Reg. U. S. Pat. Off. Copyright, 1928, by The Chicago Tribune
I'M NOT SO CRAZY 'BOUT THIS KIND OF A SIDE-WALK- ONE SLIP AN' BLOOIE-
BUT IT'S TH' ONLY WAY THROUGH THIS CANYON- AN' FOLKS THAT ARE USED TO IT DON'T SEEM TO MIND IT- LUCKY I DON'T GET DIZZY EASY-
OH- LOOK THERE, SANDY- THAT MUST BE THAT OLD 'BANDONED MINE THEY'VE BEEN TALKIN' ABOUT- LOOKS LIKE JUST AN OLD BARN- THAT'S WHAT THEY CALL TH' SHAFT HOUSE, I S'POSE-
SURE IS A LONELY PLACE- BUT IT'S ONLY A LITTLE WAY FROM TH' RAILROAD- TH' MONEY WOULDN'T BE HID THERE, THOUGH- THAT'S TH' FIRST PLACE TH' SHERIFF LOOKED-
HAROLD GRAY
Reg. U. S. Pat. Off. Copyright, 1928, by The Chicago Tribune
WHEW- WHAT A SPOOKY PLACE- IF ANYTHING SHOULD EVER HAPPEN WAY DOWN IN AN OLD MINE LIKE THIS NOBODY'D EVER FIND IT OUT- IT'S SURE TH' QUIETEST PLACE I WAS EVER IN-
LEAPIN' LIZARDS! SOMEBODY'S BEEN ALONG HERE- THERE'S PART O' THEIR CLOTHES SNAGGED ON THAT NAIL- BUT MAYBE THAT'S BEEN THERE FOR A LONG TIME-
STILL, IT MAKES YUH FEEL AWFUL CREEPY- I'M GOIN' TO GET OUTA HERE- I'VE DONE A LOT O' LOOKIN', BUT THAT'S TH' ONLY TRACE I'VE FOUND O' ANYBODY HAVIN' BEEN DOWN IN THIS PLACE FOR YEARS-
GEE, TH' FRESH AIR AND SUNSHINE FEEL GOOD- I'VE HID THAT LANTERN- IF I DECIDE TO GO BACK, ALL RIGHT- BUT I'VE HAD ENOUGH FOR ONE DAY- WONDER WHERE I'VE SEEN CLOTH LIKE THAT BEFORE- HM-M-M-M···
HAROLD GRAY

HELLO, MR. RUFF- GREAT WEATHER WE'VE BEEN HAVIN' LATELY- HOPE IT KEEPS UP-
LESSEE- YOU HAD PIE AND AN EXTRA CUP O' COFFEE- THAT'LL BE SIXTY CENTS OUT OF A DOLLAR-
?
LEAPIN' LIZARDS! HE'S JUST TORN HIS PANTS 'CAUSE THAT WAS A FRESH PATCH ON 'EM- AN' THIS PIECE O' CLOTH I FOUND DOWN IN THAT OLD MINE YESTERDAY IS JUST TH' RIGHT SIZE AND TH' SAME GOODS- WELL, THAT PROVES IT-
HAROLD GRAY
WELL, I'VE BEEN DOWN AND CHECKED UP AND THIS ONE PEG IS ALL THAT'S HOLDIN' THIS LADDER- NOW I'VE GOT IT WORKED PRETTY LOOSE-
ONE GOOD JERK ON THIS LINE AND OUT IT'LL COME- THEN TH' LADDER'LL DROP 'BOUT A THOUSAND FEET AND BUST ALL TO PIECES-
I'LL STICK THIS OTHER END O' TH' LINE OUT THIS HOLE- THEN IT CAN BE PULLED FROM OUTSIDE - BUT I'VE GOTTA BE MIGHTY CAREFUL TO COVER TH' LINE WITH LOOSE DIRT SO NO-BODY'LL NOTICE IT-
THERE, NOW- THAT'S DONE- NOW ALL I'VE GOTTA DO IS HIDE OUTSIDE IN TH' BUSHES AND WAIT FOR SOMETHIN' TO HAPPEN-
HAROLD GRAY
NO- I'M NOT COMIN' DOWN- I'LL WAIT UP HERE AND KEEP A LOOKOUT- HAVE YOU BIRDS FOUND TH' STUFF ALL RIGHT?
YEAH- HERE IT IS, JUST LIKE WE LEFT IT-
WHAT TH----?
CRASH !!!
DOG GONE IT ALL- WHY COULDN'T HE HAVE GONE DOWN, TOO? I'VE GOTTA GET THIS ROPE AWAY OR HE'LL BE ABLE TO HAUL 'EM OUT AGAIN-
BANG!
HAROLD GRAY
THIS SURE IS A GOOD DAY'S WORK- EVERY CENT OF THE LOOT RECOVERED AND ALL THE GANG BUT RUFF- HE'LL NOT BE HARD TO ROUND UP-
DAT'S DE LITTLE SWIPE THAT DONE IT-
WE'LL GET YOUSE FOR DIS-
I'D LIKE TO GET ME MITTS ON HER-
AW, PIPE DOWN- YOU GUYS AREN'T SO MUCH-
ALL RIGHT, BOYS- TAKE 'EM IN AND LOCK 'EM UP- WE'LL FOLLOW WITH THE MONEY-
HAROLD GRAY
I TAKE GREAT PLEASURE IN PAYING YOU THIS FIVE THOUSAND DOLLARS REWARD WHICH YOU HAVE EARNED AND WHICH YOU SO JUSTLY DESERVE-
THANKS-
LEAPIN' LIZARDS!!! I CAN HARDLY B'LIEVE IT YET- FIVE THOUSAND DOLLARS!!!
HERE'S FIVE THOUSAND BUCKS, MR. FISCHER - I WANTA PUT IT IN YOUR BANK WHERE IT'LL BE SAFE-
CASHIER
THERE- I FIGGER TH' SMART PLACE TO PUT MONEY IS IN A GOOD, SAFE BANK- JUST KNOWIN' IT'S THERE SURE GIVES YUH A SWELL FEELIN'- FIVE THOUSAND - WHY, SANDY, WE REALLY ARE SOMEBODY 'ROUND HERE NOW- D'YUH KNOW IT?
ARF!
HAROLD GRAY

IT SURE IS A LAZY LIFE, THIS BEIN' RICH AN' INDEPENDENT - NOTHIN' TO DO - NOTHIN' TO WORRY 'BOUT -
I TELL YUH, SANDY, IT MAKES YUH FEEL SORTA LOST - I'VE HAD SO MUCH 'CITEMENT ALL MY LIFE I SORTA MISS IT -
THERE'S THAT GANG LOOKIN' OUT TH' JAIL WINDOW NOW -
LEAPIN' LIZARDS! WHAT TERRIBLE LANGUAGE - LET'S GET AWAY WHERE WE CAN'T HEAR WHAT THEY'RE CALLIN' US - GEE - THEY'RE TOUGH - AND THOSE BARS ON THAT WINDOW DON'T LOOK ANY TOO STRONG TO SUIT ME -
HAROLD GRAY
THAT'S FUNNY - WONDER WHO LEFT THEIR CAR PARKED THERE BY TH' JAIL - OUGHTA HAVE ITS LIGHTS ON - SOMEBODY'S LI'BLE TO RAM INTO IT THERE IN TH' DARK -
NEVER SAW THAT CAR 'ROUND HERE BEFORE - MUST BE SOME GUY FROM OUTA TOWN - HM-M-M'M-M... I'LL JUST LOOK INTO THIS -
URP...
HAROLD GRAY
DAT'S DE BRAT DAT GOT US INTO ALL DIS MESS -
WELL, WE'RE OUTA JAIL, ANYWAY - BUT WHAT DO WE WANT WIT' DE KID - WHY NOT BUMP HER OFF AN' TOSS HER OUT?
NIX - NOT HERE -
HERE'S A GOOD SPOT - TAP HER ON DE HEAD AND TOSS HER INTO DE CANAL -
ALL RIGHT - HAND HER OUT HERE -
IF YOU BIRDS HURT ME "DADDY" WARBUCKS WILL SKIN YUH ALIVE AN' PAINT YUH WITH IODINE - AND HE'LL NAIL YER HIDES ON A FENCE -
WARBUCKS? SAY! I'VE HEARD O' DAT GUY! HE'S GOT ABOUT ALL DE DOUGH DERE IS -
YEAH - HE'S A BIG GUY - MAYBE IF HE'S CRAZY 'BOUT DIS KID HE'D COME THRDUGH HEAVY TO GET HER BACK ALIVE -
WELL, LET'S TAKE HER TO TH' HIDE-OUT WIT US - WE CAN CROAK HER ANY TIME -
WELL SEE WHAT BIG TOM SAYS - IF DIS KID IS WORTH ANY DOUGH HE'S DE GUY KNOWS HOW TO GET IT -
SHE SAYS DIS GUY, WARBUCKS, T'INKS SHE'S DE WHOLE WOIKS, SEE? IF HE DOES HE OUGHTA BE GOOD FOR PLENTY - HE'S GOT DE BUCKS AN' DOSE RICH GUYS ARE EASY -
ALL RIGHT - WE'LL SEE - BUT I HEARD SOMETHING ABOUT WARBUCKS - DIDN'T HE DISAPPEAR A WHILE BACK - I'LL HAVE TO LOOK INTO THIS - WE'VE GOTTA BE CAREFUL -
NOW, TREAT TH' KID ALL RIGHT - NO USE KEEPING HER TIED UP - SHE CAN'T GET AWAY - TURN HER LOOSE IN THIS ROOM - GIVE HER ANYTHING SHE WANTS TO EAT - BUT YOU WATCH HER DAY AND NIGHT -
I'M FER KNOCKIN' HER OFF - WARBUCKS WOULDN'T KNOW TILL AFTER HE'D PAID - AND WHAT'S DE USE O' WASTIN' TIME WATCHIN' DE BRAT -
NIX - WE'VE GOTTA DO WHAT BIG TOM SAYS - HE'S GOT BRAINS -
HAROLD GRAY
TH' DOOR'S LOCKED, BUT HE'S LEFT TH' KEY IN TH' DOOR - THEY'LL BE COMING FOR ME ANY MINUTE - IT'S MY ONLY CHANCE -
OOF! WOT TH....
HEY!!! WATCH OUT BELOW THERE, YOUSE GUYS!! STOP HER!
NO CHANCE TO GET AWAY GOIN' DOWN STAIRS - GEE - AN ATTIC - AND WITH THAT TRAP DOOR OPEN TO THE ROOF THEY'LL BE SURE I WENT OUT THAT WAY - I'LL JUST HIDE IN HERE FOR A SPELL AND SEE WHAT HAPPENS -
HAROLD GRAY

YOU HAVE HER DESCRIPTION- IT'S VERY IMPORTANT THAT THE KID IS PICKED UP- AND THERE'LL BE PLENTY IN IT FOR THE ONE WHO FIND'S HER- SEE?
YES SIR-
HUH!
DIDJA HEAR BIG TOM? THERE'S SOMETHIN' PHONEY SOME PLACE- WHAT DO THEY WANT THAT KID FOR? WHY SHOULD WE TAKE ORDERS FROM A CROOK LIKE HIM?
SH! TH' PROSECUTIN' ATTORNEY WORKS WITH HIM- WE'D GET FAT TRYIN' TO BUCK THAT COMBINATION, WOULDN'T WE?
LEAPIN' LIZARDS!!! YUH'D THINK YUH'D BE SAFE IF YUH WENT TO A COPPER FOR HELP- BUT IT SEEMS THEY'RE WORKIN FOR TH' GANG, TOO- BUT YUH CAN'T BLAME TH' COPS- THEY'VE GOTTA DO WHAT TH' BIG SHOTS TELL 'EM TO DO- FAT CHANCE I'VE GOT BUCKIN' A GAME LIKE THAT-
HAROLD GRAY
PLEASE, MISTER- I'M AWFUL HUNGRY- COULD YUH HELP ME GET SOMETHIN' TO EAT? I'M WILLIN' TO WORK FOR IT- PLEASE-
HM·M·M- YES- COME WITH ME- I'M ON MY WAY HOME NOW- OUT PRETTY LATE, AREN'T YOU?
YES- I'M AN ORPHAN, BUT I'VE GOT LOTS OF FRIENDS- THEY DON'T LIVE HERE, THOUGH- THERE'S TH' SILDS AT SIMMONS CORNERS AND MRS PEWTER AT MAYFAIR, AND TH' FLINTS AT BLUE BELL- THEY'D ALL BE GLAD TO SEE ME-
CALL UP RIGHT AWAY, JAMES, AND TELL THEM TO SEND OVER FOR HER-
QUITE SO, MR GOOD-DEED-
I'M SO GLAD IT'S A CASE WHERE WE CAN HELP-
YES- BEING ONE OF THE DIRECTORS THERE'LL BE NO TROUBLE ABOUT HAVING HER ADMITTED- IT'S THE BEST THING WE CAN DO FOR HER AND FOR SOCIETY-
HAROLD GRAY
THIS IS THE LITTLE ORPHAN I PHONED ABOUT- JUST TELL MISS ASTHMA I SENT HER- I ALWAYS BELIEVE IN AIDING THE POOR ORPHANS SO IT IS MOST FORTUNATE SHE CAME TO THOSE WHO COULD HELP HER IN A REALLY SENSIBLE WAY-
TH' "HOME!"
AW, GEE, MISTER- I KNOW THAT JOINT- DO I HAVE TO GO BACK?
C'MON, KID- I DON'T BLAME YUH FOR NOT TRYIN' TO BREAK IN HERE- BUT ORDERS IS ORDERS-
ORPHANS HOME
HERE'S THAT KID TH' GOOD-DEEDS SENT OVER-
ANNIE!!! WELL, I SUPPOSE WE'LL HAVE TO MAKE ROOM FOR YOU- MR. GOOD-DEED IS A DIRECTOR OF THIS "HOME"-
WELL, MISS ASTHMA, IT ISN'T MY FAULT I'M BACK HERE-
NO- I SUPPOSE NOT- YOU COULDN'T HELP IT- BUT I EXPECTED IT- BAD PENNIES ALWAYS COME BACK-
HAROLD GRAY
WELL, I MAY BE IN TH' "HOME" RIGHT NOW- BUT I BETCHA I WON'T STAY HERE VERY LONG-
I'LL WRITE TO MR AND MRS. FLINT AT BLUE BELL, TO MR AND MRS. SILD AT SIMMONS CORNERS, AND TO MRS. PEWTER-
THERE- SOME OF 'EM ARE SURE TO GET ME OUTA HERE SOON AS THEY KNOW WHERE I AM - AND THEY WON'T LET THAT GANG GRAB ME, EITHER-
HM·M·M- NOW I'VE GOTTA HAVE SOME STAMPS- MISS ASTHMA'S AWFUL CHEAP, BUT I GUESS SHE'LL BE WILLIN' TO PUT UP THREE STAMPS TO GET RID OF ME- I'LL ASK HER-
HAROLD GRAY
LET'S SEE- WHERE DID I PUT THOSE LETTERS ANNIE GAVE ME TO MAIL? AH- HERE THEY ARE- NOW TO SEE WHAT SHE HAS WRITTEN- IT'S REALLY MY DUTY TO SEE THAT NONE OF MY CHARGES DO ANYTHING TO ANNOY THOSE TO WHOM THEY CAN MEAN NOTHING-
WELL, I MUST SAY! SO I'M AN "OLD CRAB," AM I? AND THE "GRUB," AS SHE CALLS THE FOOD, IS "NOTHING TO BRAG ABOUT"- HUMPH- AND SHE HOPES THEY'LL COME AND TAKE HER AWAY FROM HERE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE-
THE LITTLE WRETCH- IT WOULD BE GOOD RIDDANCE PERHAPS - BUT I COULD NEVER THINK OF ALLOWING SUCH LETTERS TO GO OUT OF THE "HOME"- WHY, WHAT A NAME IT WOULD GIVE ME-
AND THE MERE FACT THAT SHE IS SO ANXIOUS TO LEAVE DOES NOT REFLECT VERY HIGHLY ON THE "HOME"- AND AFTER ALL WE HAVE DONE FOR HER HERE- THE UNGRATEFUL LITTLE HUSSY-
HAROLD GRAY

I KINDA THOUGHT MRS PEWTER OR MR. SILO OR MR FLINT WOULD BE HERE 'FORE THIS - BUT MAYBE IT TAKES LONGER FOR LETTERS TO GET TO THEM THAN I'D FIGGERED -
WHAT TH'.... ? WHY, THAT LOOKS LIKE.....
IT IS - MY LETTERS!!! ALL TORN UP AND THROWN AWAY -
OH! OH! OH! BOO! HOO! HOO!! THE OLD FRAUD - SHE NEVER MAILED 'EM - AND NOBODY'S COMIN' FOR ME NOW - OH! OH! OH!
Reg U S Pat Off Copyright, 1928, by The Chicago Tribune
THERE GOES MISS ASTHMA, TH' DARNED OLD CRAB - TORE UP ALL MY LETTERS, 'STEAD O' MAILIN' 'EM - AN' SHE READ 'EM FIRST - BUT I CAN'T DO A THING 'BOUT IT - GEE - I'LL NEVER GET OUTA THIS PLACE, NOW -
DIDJA HEAR 'BOUT TH' BIG PICNIC ON NEXT WEDNESDAY, ANNIE? WE'RE ALL 'VITED - EVERY ORPHAN IN TOWN - THOUSANDS OF 'EM - AND THEY'LL TAKE US FOR AN AUTO RIDE AND THERE'LL BE FRUIT AND CANDY AND ICE CREAM FOR EVERBODY - AND GAMES AND CLOWNS - ISN'T THAT WONDERFUL?
GEE!
WHILE, IN THE MEANTIME, OUT OF THE MYSTERIOUS REACHES OF THE PACIFIC, APPEARS THE BATTERED GHOST OF WHAT MUST ONCE HAVE BEEN A GORGEOUS YACHT -
I CAN'T MAKE OUT HER NAME - A STRANGE CRAFT - BROKEN LIFE BOATS - BEEN IN A BAD STORM - HELLO - THERE ARE HOLES THAT LOOK LIKE SHELL HOLES!
WELL, WE'RE IN PORT AT LAST - NOW TO GET ASHORE AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE AND IN TOUCH WITH THE WORLD AGAIN -
AYE AYE, MR. WARBUCKS!
Reg U S Pat Off Copyright, 1928, by The Chicago Tribune
GEE - TOMORROW'S TH' DAY O' THE BIG PICNIC FOR ALL TH' ORPHAN KIDS IN TOWN - THEY SAY THERE'LL BE THOUSANDS OF 'EM THERE - AND EVERY KID GETS AN AUTO RIDE AND SANDWICHES AND CANDY AND ICE CREAM - AND FUN FOR EVERYBODY -
GEE - 'MAGINE FOLKS SPENDIN' THEIR TIME AND MONEY TO DO ALL THAT FOR POOR ORPHAN KIDS LIKE US - I GUESS THERE'S LOTS OF REAL, BIG-HEARTED FOLKS IN THIS 'WORLD AFTER ALL - I'M SURE GOIN' TO HAVE A BIG TIME - I KNOW THAT -
WHILE, IN A DISTANT SEAPORT TOWN WARBUCKS STRIVES TO PICK UP THE BROKEN THREADS OF HIS FAR-FLUNG AFFAIRS - AND HIS FIRST THOUGHT IS FOR ANNIE -
FIRST OF ALL, I WANT TO GET IN TOUCH WITH LITTLE ANNIE AND LET HER KNOW I'M BACK -
BUT, YOU SEE, MR WARBUCKS, WE, ER THOUGHT YOU MUST BE DEAD - EVERYONE THOUGHT SO - AND MISS ANNIE HAS DISAPPEARED
Reg U S Pat Off Copyright 1928 by The Chicago Tribune HAROLD GRAY
WHAT? YOU SAY SHE'S DISAPPEARED!!! IMPOSSIBLE! WHY, I GAVE ORDERS BEFORE I LEFT - SHE CAN'T BE GONE - FIND OUT WHERE SHE WENT - LOCATE HER AT ONCE - DO YOU HEAR? FIND HER!
Y-YES, SIR -
JUST A MINUTE, YOUNG LADY - YOU'RE NOT GOING TO THE PICNIC - SOME ONE MUST STAY HERE AND WASH THE BREAKFAST DISHES AND PUT THINGS IN ORDER -
AW, GEE!
THERE THEY GO - LEAPIN' LIZARDS! AND I'D BEEN PLANNIN' ALL TH' FUN I'D HAVE - THERE'S NO NEED O' ANYBODY STAYIN' HOME HERE - SHE JUST WANTED TO BE MEAN TO ME - THAT'S ALL -
I'M TOO BLAMED BIG TO BAWL LIKE A KID - B-B BUT I CAN'T HELP IT - (SNIFF SNIFF) NOBODY'LL SEE ME, ANYWAY - AND A GOOD CRY HELPS A HEAP, SOME TIMES - BOO! HOO! HOO!!
Reg U S Pat Off Copyright, 1928, by The Chicago Tribune
AND IN THE MEANTIME, CLOSER AND CLOSER, OVER MOUNTAIN AND VALLEY, RACES A GIANT PLANE - IS ANNIE'S DESTINY RIDING THE SKIES TO-NIGHT? TIME ALONE CAN ANSWER -
WE WUZ AWFUL SORRY, ANNIE, THAT YUH DIDN'T GET TO GO TO TH' PICNIC YESTERDAY - IT WAS SWELL - SO WE BROUGHT YUH SOMETHIN' WE THOUGHT MAYBE YOU'D LIKE -
'GEE! CANDY - THAT SURE WAS NICE OF YOU KIDS - C'MON - HAVE SOME -
AW, YOU EAT IT, ANNIE - IT WAS A SHAME YOU HAD TO STAY HOME AN' MISS TH' FUN -
WHILE, IN ANOTHER PART OF THE CITY, A HURRYING TIGHT-LIPPED FIGURE STEPS FROM A PLANE TO A WAITING MOTOR-CAR.
HAROLD GRAY
AND IS WHISKED THROUGH PARTED TRAFFIC TO THE GREAT DOWN-TOWN SKY SCRAPER AT WHOSE TOP IS THE LITTLE OFFICE WHICH IS THE CENTER OF HIS WORLD - AGAIN THE OLD WARRIOR IS AT HIS POST -
WHERE
Reg U S Pat Off Copyright, 1928, by The Chicago Tribune

NOW WITH A LITTLE LUCK, IF I CAN FIND THAT MAN WELLS I'LL BE ALL RIGHT AND THERELL BE NO TIME LOST-
I'M LOOKING FOR A LITTLE ORPHAN GIRL NAMED ANNIE- I WAS TOLD YOU COULD HELP ME LOCATE HER, MR WELLS- MY NAME IS WARBUCKS-
WELL, I'M AFRAID I CAN'T HELP MUCH- YOU SEE WE HAD HER BUT WE LOST HER-
YOU TELL ME ABOUT IT ON THE WAY- I'VE ARRANGED FOR ANOTHER GUY TO TAKE YOUR TRICK-
BUT- BUT I DON'T KNOW THAT I CAN HELP- REALLY -- MUCH AS I WANT TO...
YOU CAN HELP, ALL RIGHT- JUST HOP ON HERE - PRIVATE TRAIN- WE DON'T WANT TO WASTE ANY TIME -
HERE'S THE HOUSE ANNIE BOUGHT WITH THE REWARD AS I WAS TELLING YOU- OUR PLACE IS RIGHT NEXT DOOR -
SANDY!
?
ARF!
WELL, OLD KID, THEY CAN'T STOP US NOW- WITH YOU HELPING, SANDY, WE'RE BOUND TO FIND ANNIE IN SHORT ORDER-
HE HASN'T EATEN HARDLY AT ALL SINCE ANNIE DISAPPEARED-
YESSIR, SANDY- HERE'S THE JAIL THEY BROKE OUT OF THAT NIGHT- NOT SUCH A HARD JOB FOR A GANG LIKE THAT-
AND THEY'D HAVE HAD A CAR PARKED ABOUT HERE - ANNIE WOULD HAVE BEEN ON HER WAY HOME FROM THE RESTAURANT ABOUT THAT TIME OF NIGHT - BUT KNOWING THAT DOESN'T HELP US MUCH NOW -
NO SIR, MR WARBUCKS - I CAN'T BELIEVE ANNIE HAS BEEN HARMED, THOUGH NO DOUBT THAT GANG PICKED HER UP THAT NIGHT - BUT UNTIL SHE IS FOUND WE'LL NEVER KNOW JUST WHAT DID HAPPEN -
WHAT A DIFFERENCE IF 'DADDY' HAD ONLY THE POWER OF CLAIRVOYANCE - BUT HOW CAN HE KNOW THAT ANNIE IS SAFE, THOUGH A PRISONER, IN THE 'HOME'?
OH WELL, THEY SAY IT'S A GREAT LIFE, IF YUH DON'T WEAKEN -
COURSE 'DADDY'S' GONE FOREVER- AN' YET I CAN'T HELP THINKIN' 'BOUT HIM AN AWFUL LOT LATELY- AN' I KEEP DREAMIN' ABOUT HIM TOO- WONDER WHY THAT IS -
SO! IS THAT THE WAY YOU DO YOUR WORK WHEN MY BACK IS TURNED FOR A SECOND? NO GREAT TASKS HAVE EVER BEEN ACCOMPLISHED BY DAY DREAMING -
YESSUM
AW, TH' OLD SNOOP! ALWAYS SNEAKIN' UP BEHIND YUH - I DON'T MIND TH WORK AROUND HERE SO MUCH - BUT THAT OLD BIRD MAKES ME JUMPY -
WHILE, WITH A CLEAR TRACK AND AN OPEN THROTTLE, A SPECIAL TRAIN HURLS 'DADDY' WARBUCKS THROUGH THE NIGHT BACK TO THE CITY- AT LAST HE FEELS HE IS ON THE RIGHT TRAIL -
GEE - SOME TIMES IT DOESN'T SEEM LIKE AN ORPHAN KID EVER GETS AN EVEN BREAK - BUT I DUNNO - I GUESS EVERYTHING MOST ALWAYS WORKS OUT PRETTY EVEN 'FORE YUH GET THROUGH -
---- AN' PLEASE MAKE 'DADDY' COME BACK REAL SOON AN' HELP HIM FIND ME - (IF HE EVER IS COMIN' BACK) - AMEN -
WHILE A GRIM FIGURE SCOURS THE CITY RELENTLESSLY ON WHAT, AT TIMES, SEEMS A HOPELESS QUEST -----

BIG TOM PRATICALLY CONTROLS CITY HALL - THE BIG BOYS OVER THERE DO WHAT HE TELLS 'EM - ARREST ANY OF HIS GANG AND THEY'RE ON THE STREET AGAIN IN FIVE MINUTES - HE'S IMMUNE - WHAT CAN WE DO?
SO THAT'S IT - THINK THEY'RE BIGGER THAN LAW AND ORDER, DO THEY? AND OUR SO-CALLED NICE PEOPLE ARE TOO LILY-WHITE TO GO AFTER 'EM WITH THEIR OWN TOOLS -
BOSS THIS TOWN WITH GUNS - BOMBS - VIOLENCE - IF THAT'S THEIR DISH I'LL GIVE 'EM A STOMACH FULL -
WE'LL HAVE THE WRECKING CREW READY AT MIDNIGHT - WE'VE GOT LOTS TO DO SO STEP ON IT -
HAROLD GRAY
JIGGERS, TOM! A BIG MOB'S RUSHIN' THE JOINT - SIX CARS FULL O' GUYS -
BAR THE DOOR -
QUICK!! UP WITH 'EM - STRETCH!
NOW THEN - YOU KIDNAPED A LITTLE GIRL NAMED ANNIE - WHERE IS SHE?
NEVER HEARD OF HER - AND SAY! WHAT'S TH' BIG IDEA? YOU CAN'T TOUCH ME -
NEVER HEARD OF HER, EH? WE MIGHT AS WELL START RIGHT - NOW TELL ME THE TRUTH, QUICK! BEFORE I LOSE MY TEMPER -
HAROLD GRAY
BIG TOM WAS RIGHT - THERE'S ONE OF HIS GANG PICKETING THIS BRIDGE -
LISTEN, YOU - IF YOU'RE EVER SEEN IN THIS TOWN AGAIN YOU'LL BE BLASTED - YOU'VE GOT FIVE SECONDS TO CHECK -
GIMME A CHANCE, BOSS - JUST GIMME A CHANCE -
NOW WE'LL PUT OUR MEN ON ALL THE BRIDGES AND ALONG THE WHARVES - HAVE IT DONE AT ONCE -
YES, SIR - MR. WARBUCKS -
WHILE LITTLE ANNIE, THE INNOCENT CAUSE OF THIS CITY-WIDE UPHEAVEL, FINDS LIFE EXCITING, EVEN IN THE "HOME" -
WITH THAT GANG STILL OUT FOR ME I'M SCARED TO EVEN LOOK OUT O' TH' WINDOW ANY MORE - GEE!
HAROLD GRAY
SO YOU'RE TH' LOOKOUT, EH? WELL, I'M ONE CALLER YOU DON'T ANNOUNCE, SEE? ONE PEEP OUTA YOU AND I'LL----
YESSIR! YESSIR!
IT'S WARBUCKS
CHEEZE IT.
DAT GUY'S SURE GOT NOIVE BUSTIN' IN HERE ALONE LIKE DAT -
WE COULD'A' GOT HIM EASY WHEN HE TURNED HIS BACK -
FUNNY DE LOOKOUT DIDN'T GIVE US DE FLASH HE WAS COMIN' -
YEAH, MAYBE - DAT GUY'S TOO QUIET - HE GIVES ME DE CREEPS -
LISTEN - DAT GUY'S GOTTA GO, SEE? HE'S DE ONE GUY DAT'S SPOILIN' OUR RACKET - HE DON'T STICK TO 'DE LAW - WIT' HIM GONE DIS REFORM HOOIE WOULD GO BUST IN A WEEK - WE'VE GOT TO GET HIM -
OH - THOSE ARE THE TWO RODS I SENT AWAY FOR - THEY LOOK LIKE TH' REAL McCOY -
HERE'S YER DOUGH---- HALF OF IT - YUH GET TH' OTHER HALF WHEN YOUR JOB'S DONE, SEE? YOU'RE STRANGERS HERE - NOBODY'LL SPOT YUH - AND WE'LL SEE YUH GET AWAY O.K. AFTERWARDS -
NOW YOU'VE GOT YOUR ORDERS - GET WARBUCKS - GET HIM QUIET, IF YOU CAN - BUT GET HIM!
HAROLD GRAY

WAIT HERE A MINUTE, JACK- I'LL BE RIGHT BACK-
YES, SIR
BANG!!!
BANG!!!
BANG!!!
I LEFT A COUPLE O' BIRDS IN THERE, JACK- HAUL 'EM AWAY 'FORE SOME ONE FINDS 'EM - AND 'FORE THEY COME TO-
YES, SIR-
HAROLD GRAY
MISTER WARBUCKS! CAN I SPEAK TO YOU A MINUTE?
WHAT'S THIS? SECRET TUNNELS AND CHAMBERS WAY DOWN WHERE THE POLICE HAVE NEVER EVEN THOUGHT OF LOOKING?
YES-YES- NO ONE EVER FIND WITHOUT GUIDE- BUT YOU COME ALONE- I SHOW YOU- I THINK YOU FIND SOMETHING YOU LOOK FOR, MAYBE-
LISTEN- I'LL MEET YOU HERE TO-MORROW AT MIDNIGHT- I'LL BE ALONE- IF YOU HELP ME FIND WHAT I WANT I'LL PAY YOU WELL-
YES, SIR- MIDNIGHT- I BE HERE-
'DADDY' WILL RUN ANY RISK IN HIS FRANTIC SEARCH FOR ANNIE - IF HE COULD ONLY KNOW THAT THE ONE HE SEEKS IS SAFE IN THE HOME!- BUT WILL HE LIVE TO FIND HER? IT IS DOUBTFUL.
HOW TH' HECK CAN WE WASH OUR NECK IF IT AIN'T GOIN' TO RAIN NO MORE?
HAROLD GRAY
BUT, WARBUCKS! WHAT IF THAT LITTLE WEASEL IS RIGHT? SUPPOSE ALL THOSE TUNNELS ARE THERE - IT LOOKS TO ME LIKE A TRICK TO GET YOU IN A SPOT WHERE THEY CAN MURDER YOU - TAKE MY ADVICE AND DON'T GO -
SHE MAY BE HIDDEN THERE - I'M GOING TO HAVE A LOOK-
THEN LET ME GO WITH YOU- WE'LL TAKE A SQUAD WITH US -
NO- THIS BIRD WON'T GUIDE ME UNLESS I GO ALONE - AND I'VE BEEN IN AS TOUGH SPOTS AS ANYTHING HE CAN SHOW ME -
LISTEN - I MADE YOU CHIEF BECAUSE I KNEW YOU WERE FEARLESS AND HONEST - SEE? NOT TO GET KILLED IN MY PRIVATE WAR - I'M GOING DOWN THERE AND I'M GOING ALONE - AND I'M COMING BACK -
AND WHILE 'DADDY' GOES FEARLESSLY TO WHAT MAY BE HIS DEATH, THE OBJECT OF HIS SEARCH SLEEPS PEACEFULLY IN HER LITTLE BED AFTER A HARD DAY'S WORK IN THE 'HOME'-
HAROLD GRAY
NOT TEN MINUTES AGO I GOT THE TIP - THIS WAS A PLANT TO MURDER WARBUCKS, AS I FEARED - HERE'S THE BASEMENT - NOW WHERE'S THE SECRET TRAP-DOOR INTO THAT TUNNEL? BUT WE'LL BE TOO LATE -
HELLO! THERE IT IS - STEADY, MEN ---
YEOW!
BAM!
BAM!
BANG!
GREAT SCOTT! THERE'S BLOODY ED, AND HAMMER JOE - CRIMINALS WHO HAVE DODGED THE CHAIR FOR YEARS -
HAROLD GRAY
LOOK OUT - HERE HE IS!!!
HIDE ME SOME PLACE, QUICK - HERE HE COMES.
OW!!! KEEP THAT FIEND OFFA ME!
WELL, CHIEF - I LOOKED ALL AROUND - SHE'S NOT DOWN THERE -
I DON'T CARE WHAT THOSE RECORDS TELL ME ABOUT ANNIE - I'M GOING TO THE "HOME" AND SEE THEM - I'VE GOT TO KNOW -
THERE'S THE "HOME", SANDY - THERE'S WHERE ANNIE CAME FROM - SHE NEVER REMEMBERED ANY FARTHER BACK - AND I DON'T CARE TO KNOW ANY MORE ABOUT HER -
ORPHANS HOME
BUT WHAT IF I SHOULD FIND THAT SOME ONE ELSE HAD A BETTER CLAIM TO HER THAN I HAVE?
ORPHANS HOME
THOSE RECORDS MIGHT POINT THE WAY TO HER - YES - BUT IF THEY FOUND HER FOR ME ONLY TO HAVE TO GIVE HER UP .... NO ... I WON'T GO IN JUST YET ... I CAN'T - TO-MORROW, PERHAPS -
HAROLD GRAY

FIRE!!! FIRE!!!
OH MERCIFUL HEAVENS!!! WE'LL ALL BE ROASTED ALIVE! HELP! SAVE ME!
HEY! WAIT A MINUTE- WE'VE GOTTA GET TH' KIDS OUT! HEY!!!
STEADY- YUH'VE GOT LOTS O' TIME - JUST KEEP WALKIN' RIGHT OUT TO TH' STREET - GEE, I THINK THAT'S ALL OF 'EM - BUT I'LL RUN BACK UP-STAIRS AND HAVE JUST ONE MORE LOOK AROUND - I'VE GOTTA BE SURE -
THERE'S "DADDY" AND HE SEES ME - I'LL BE RIGHT DOWN, "DADDY" - GEE, IT'S GETTIN' HOT IN HERE -
IT'S NO USE, SIR - THE WALLS ARE CAVING IN ALREADY -
ANNIE! OH, ANNIE!!!
STOP HIM, MEN - HE'S GONE CRAZY -
THE PLACE IS A FURNACE - NO ONE COULD LIVE A SECOND IN THERE -
SH! SHE'S STILL ASLEEP - THE POOR LITTLE THING - SHE WAS ALL TUCKERED OUT -
BUT SHE WAS HARDLY BURNED AT ALL - SHE JUMPED INTO THE RIVER BEFORE SHE WAS MORE THAN SINGED - AND YOU PULLED HER OUT BEFORE SHE DROWNED, THANK HEAVEN - BUT I DO WISH YOU'D GO ASHORE AND TRY TO FIND OUT WHO SHE IS -
HM-M-M- HARDLY KNOW WHERE TO GO TO FIND OUT ABOUT THAT YOUNGSTER - GUESS THE BEST WAY IS TO BUY A PAPER - THAT WAS A BIG FIRE - MIGHT BE A STORY ABOUT IT -
WHILE, SICK AT HEART, "DADDY" SILENTLY AWAITS WHAT HE IS DREADFULLY SURE THE SMOKING RUINS OF THE 'HOME' WILL SOON GIVE UP - FOR HIM IT IS A BITTER, BITTER NIGHT -
I WOULDN'T HAVE GOT CAUGHT IN THAT FIRE AT ALL BUT MISS ASTHMA RAN OUT AND SOMEBODY HAD TO GET THE KIDS OUT - THERE WASN'T ANY TIME TO WASTE, EITHER -
IT SAYS HERE THAT ALL BUT ONE CHILD HAS BEEN SAVED - THAT MUST MEAN YOU, ANNIE - MISS ASTHMA IS BEING HELD BY THE POLICE ON THE ORDERS OF MR. WARBUCKS, WHO IS FORCING A THOROUGH INVESTIGATION - SO YOU KNOW WARBUCKS, EH?
THE CHARRED RUINS OF THE "HOME" HAVE YIELDED NO CLEW OF ANNIE - BUT IT IS APPARENT TO WARBUCKS THAT SHE NEVER COULD HAVE ESCAPED THAT INFERNO -
SHE GAVE HER LIFE TO SAVE THE OTHERS - THE PAPERS CALL IT HEROISM - UNFALTERING COURAGE - BUT WHAT A SACRIFICE - IF I HAD ONLY KNOWN SHE WAS THERE -
SO, IN A GREAT HOUSE TO-NIGHT, SURROUNDED BY USELESS COMFORTS, HIS FONDEST HOPES AND DREAMS IN ASHES, THERE SITS A BROKEN OLD MAN - AND HIS SOLE COMPANION IN MISERY IS A DOG THAT TRIES IN VAIN TO UNDERSTAND -
THE DEAR LITTLE TYKE - SHE SOLD HER LIFE TO SAVE A HUNDRED OTHERS - BUT SHE WAS SO YOUNG - WHY DID IT HAVE TO BE ANNIE? WHY COULDN'T IT HAVE BEEN THAT LYING OLD HARPY? NO PUNISHMENT CAN EVER PAY THAT WOMAN IN FULL FOR WHAT HAS HAPPENED -
BEG PARDON, SIR - BUT THERE IS A FELLOW AT THE DOOR WHO INSISTS ON SEEING YOU - HE WON'T GO AWAY, SIR - HE SAYS IT IS VERY IMPORTANT.
NOTHING IS IMPORTANT ANY MORE - BUT SEND HIM IN - I'LL SEE WHAT HE WANTS -
THE OTHER NIGHT I SAW A KID ALL ON FIRE JUMP INTO THE RIVER, SO IN I GOES AND PULLS HER OUT - A LITTLE GIRL, IT WAS - AND SHE SAID SHE KNEW YOU - SAYS HER NAME'S ANNIE....
WHAT'S THAT? ANNIE, ALIVE!!! IT'S IMPOSSIBLE - QUICK! WHERE IS SHE?
YES - I DID THE BEST I COULD WITH YOUR DRESS - BUT THE BACK WAS PRETTY BADLY BURNED.
AW, YOU DIDN'T HAVE TO DO ALL THAT FOR ME, BUT IT WAS AWFUL NICE OF YOU -
SH-H-H-H- THERE COMES SOMEBODY RUNNING OUT ON THE PIER - THEY'RE COMING ABOARD OUR BOAT -
OH, ANNIE, ANNIE!!!
"DADDY"! I KNEW YOU'D COME -
ARF!
HAROLD GRAY

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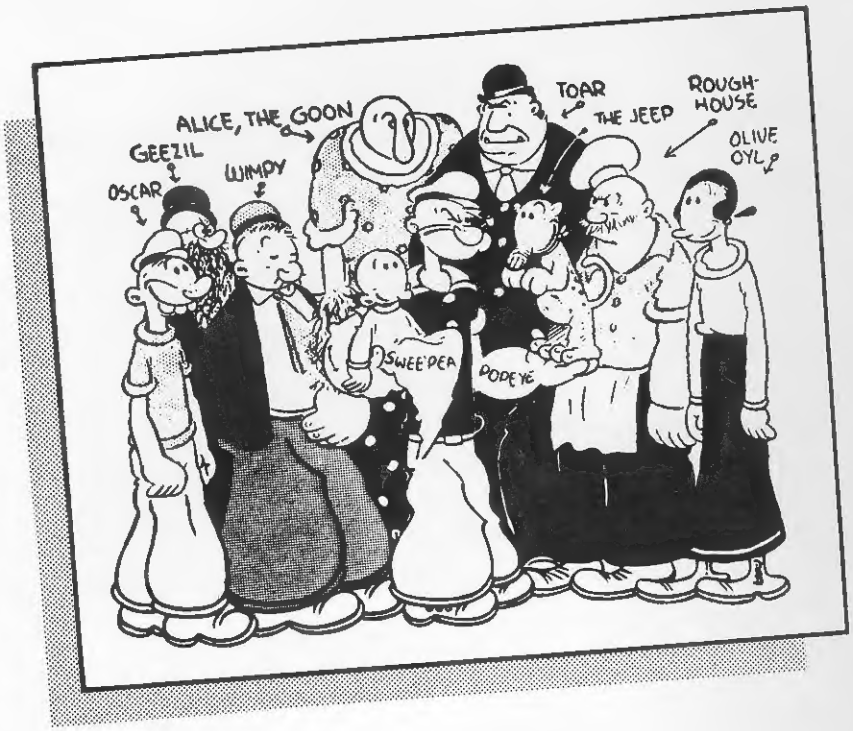

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